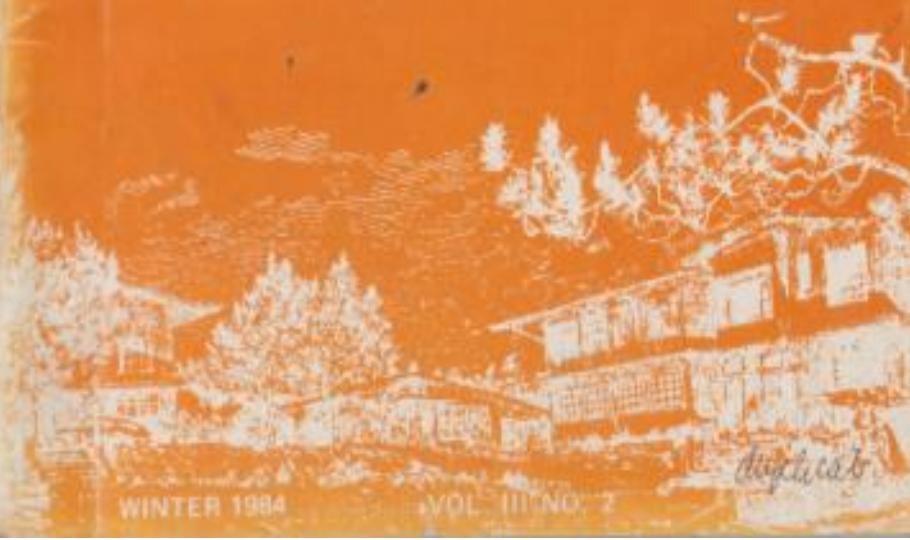


Philippine Baptist Theological Seminary

JOURNAL
of
CHURCH MINISTRIES

REPARING FOR MINISTRY:
TEWARDSHIP, MODEL PRAYER,
EATTITUDES



WINTER 1984

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JOURNAL

OF

CHURCH MINISTRIES

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EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

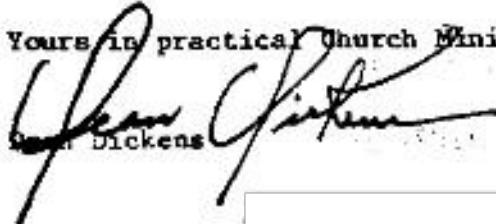
Four years ago when I started in this seminary and journal, I determined that it must be a practical journal for those of you who minister in Asian Churches. Throughout these four years we have covered various types of material to help you preach through Ephesians, First Peter, and other passages. We have looked at various articles on stewardship, pastoral care, and the like. In my final issue as editor, we look at two articles particularly written with an Asian slant. Henry Silbor, Old Testament professor at PBTS (Baguio) has shared much needed words in his missions sermon.

Roberto Betia's Master's thesis provides an excellent overview of how Asians in general and Filipinos in particular may reflect culturally on Paul's writings about "Adoption." It should give you a good chance to think culturally and Biblically at the same time.

Roy Hilton's article with sermon insights concerning the Beatitudes will provide you with ideas for several strong Biblical sermons from this passage. Altus Newell's article on "The Disciples' Prayer" will also help you with preaching insights. "Thank you" to Proclaim for permission to use it.

So, you will find something practical here for your own Asian ministry. Many thanks for the positive words from Asia, America, and world-wide. I hope the new editor enjoys it as much as I have.

Yours in practical Church Ministries,


Dean Dickens

STUDY OF THE BEATITUDES

Roy Hilton

Editorial Note:

These studies are provided as basic "sermon starters" to help you in preaching on the Beatitudes. While these studies are taken from Matthew 5:3-12 you may also want to study the beatitudes in Luke 6: 20-23. You will want to take "the man" while those in Luke relate to "you." Remember, too, that they do not describe eight different types of people. Rather, they describe eight standards for all of us to attempt. Someone has described these ideas as "BE-ATTITUDES."

I suggest that you look upon each of the "points" Bro. Hilton makes for each sermon as "EXPLANATION." You will also need to add to this (at each point) your "ILLUSTRATION" of the point and your "APPLICATION" of the point. Thus, each sermon point will look like this:

I. THE "POINT"

EXPLANATION (use the study material provided)

ILLUSTRATION (add your illustrations)

APPLICATION (add your applications)

II. THE "POINT"

EXPLANATION

ILLUSTRATION

APPLICATION

A STUDY OF THE BEATITUDES

1st Beatitude - Happiness is for Spiritually.
Scripture - Matt. 5:3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

INTRODUCTION:

These messages have to do with happiness: where and how to find it. There is a slogan used freely by the advertising world which says "Happiness is." "Happiness is candy" - "Happiness is camping out" - "Happiness is vacation" - etc. etc.

Jesus, in the sermon on the mount, is telling his disciples about true happiness. He follows the same pattern as he relates these qualities of happiness.

For example:

He Declares the Blessing - "Blessed are."
He Discloses those to be Blessed - "The poor in spirit."
He Describes the Blessing - "Theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven."

These teachings are perhaps the strangest that Jesus ever uttered. We should also note that even though the fulness of these blessings are reserved for the future their freshness is available now. These are not something that will be but what already is. With this in mind let us now look at these beatitudes one by one. Read again Matt. 5:1-3 for the text.

Then note the following:

I. THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS

The constitution of some countries guarantee to every citizen the right to the "Pursuit of Happiness." This does not mean that everyone will find it. It doesn't even tell us what it is nor where it is. It only says - "go out and search for it." Real happiness is hard to find. People seek it in many ways but most fail to find

III. THE PRONOUNCEMENT OF HAPPINESS

Jesus often teaches by comparison. In these beatitudes he draws a contrast between the mind of God and the mind of man.

Man says - happy are the rich.

Jesus says - happy are the poor.

Man says - happy are the joyful.

Jesus says - happy are they that mourn.

Man says - happy are the mighty.

Jesus says - happy are the meek.

Man says - happy are they that eat and drink.

Jesus says - happy are those who hunger and thirst.

God has said in Isaiah 55:8-9 "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."

If true happiness is to be found it will have to be found in our spiritual relationship with Christ rather than in our physical relationship with Adam. However, most people continue to live to the flesh even after Jesus said, "The flesh profiteth nothing;" John 6:63. This word "poor" seems to have embraced a series of thoughts. It seems to have progressed from the physical to the spiritual. For example -- Those who are poor in material wealth are without influence or power and because of their weakness they are down-trodden. However, this may cause the person to seek God's help through a poverty of spirit. And, of course, it is the impoverished spirit that finds happiness in Christ. Blessed are the poor in spirit for their sense of spiritual poverty will cause them to seek the spiritual riches to be found only in Christ Jesus. It is like being poor, yet having everything. This brings us to the very heart of the beatitudes. The blessings are not for those who are poor materially. It is for those who recognize their spiritual poverty.

When a person sees his spiritual poverty he will be stripped of all pride. Pride has to go. These people gathered with Jesus on that mountain were Jews. They had lived as a people of pride for centuries. They had a pride of heritage ... a pride of ancestry ... a pride of religion ... pride that Jehovah was their God ... Pride characterized these people from the time of Abraham. But now Jesus is stripping them of pride and talking to them about humility. Someone has said that humility is the first step to God and pride is the first step away from him. Satan's appeal to Adam and Eve was the pride of life ... this fashion will not and cannot find happiness. Happiness is reserved for those who are poor in the spirit.

III. THE PROVISION OF HAPPINESS

"Theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven." Jesus is teaching his disciples that all of the resources of heaven are at the disposal of those who, in the spirit of humility rather than pride, sense spiritual poverty and dependence upon God, come to him through Christ Jesus for the blessing.

This poverty is your wealth. The one who was wealthy became poor that we through his poverty might be made rich (2 Cor. 8:9).

2nd Beatitude - Happiness is for those who Mourn.
Scripture - Matt. 5:4 "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted." Also compare with II Cor. 1:3-7.

INTRODUCTION:

Here is another strange teaching: Jesus is talking about great happiness coming from great sorrow. Man would never dream of suggesting such a thing. In fact, man just doesn't see it this way.

"Mourn" is the strongest word for sorrow in the Greek language. It (pentheo) is used for mourning for

the dead. It is deep grief; sorrow that cannot be hidden. It could read, "O the happiness of the person, who sorrows like one who is mourning over the death of a loved one."

Let us notice three things:

I. CHARACTER OF THE MOURNER

1. He is a man of faith. See Luke 7 where Jesus speaks of the Centurion - The servant was about to die - Jesus was nearby. The Centurion send friends to Jesus saying, Lord, trouble not thyself, for I am not worthy that you should enter my house. Neither am I worthy to come to yourmyself. However, if you will but speak you can heal my servant.
2. The mourner must be sincere. We need to remember that the sorrow spoken of here is sorrow for sin.

Note David's prayer of confession in Psalm 51. No greater sorrow for sin has ever been recorded than this.

2 Cor. 7:10 - "Godly sorrow worketh repentance." "The seed of sinful pleasure lasts only for a day; but the sorrow of repentance last so long."

II. CAUSES OF MOURNING

1. Physical sorrows are a cause of mourning. There is a blessing for the man who has experienced the bitterest sorrow that life can bring. The Arabs have a saying - "All sunshine makes a desert." Even in the Holy Land all sunshine does make a desert. If nature is to be properly balanced it must have some rain, wind storms, seasons, winter and summer.

A person who is sheltered from all of life's sorrows and trials will not be properly balanced in his spiritual or physical life. To appreciate love one must know what hatred

is. To enjoy peace one must know something about the storm. To enjoy gladness one must have had to wrestle with sorrow. I forgot the Poet's name who wrote:

I walked a mile with pleasure,
She chatted all the way.
But left me none the wiser
For all she had to say.
I walked a mile with sorrow,
and not a word said she.
But the things I learned from her,
As sorrow walked with me.

We say that problems, sorrows, pressures, trials, tribulations are the things that break us. Jesus says no - They are the things that make us.

2. Social conditions are also a cause for mourning. Blessed are those who give over the suffering, sorrows, and poverty of others. Christianity is caring for others. There is much suffering in this world. It is so severe that it should make the Angels weep. Surely we cannot fail to be concerned.
3. Spiritual conditions are a third cause for mourning. This is the main truth of the beatitude Jesus is saying - blessed or happy is the man who mourns over his own sins as one who mourns over the death of a loved one. Sorrow for sin is the central thought in this beatitude. We must see sin for what it is and what it does. It broke the heart of God - crucified the Son of God - and grieves the spirit of God. It ought to break our heart for every sin we do dishonors God.

III. COMFORT FOR THE MOURNER

Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. This benefit is promised by a God who cannot lie. He has sent a special person in the world who will give special attention to the

person who mourns as our text describes. See John 14:16. "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another comforter." This is the Holy Spirit. We have a combination of two words that describes the person and work of the Holy Spirit.

The word paraclete means one who is called alongside of. The word comforter is from two Latin words; "Cum," meaning with, and "forte" meaning power.

The Holy Spirit is our paraclete and comforter. He is one who is called alongside of us to walk with us furnishing power to face the problems of life as well as to live the Christian life. This is a main function of the Holy Spirit's work but he also binds up the broken hearted and will give comfort to those who mourn. See Isaiah 61:2 and John 14:18.

Psalms 32:1-2. "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile."

3rd Beatitude - Happiness is for the Meek.

Scripture - Matt. 5:5 "Blessed are meek; for they shall inherit the earth." See also and read Psalms 37:1-11.

INTRODUCTION:

When these words were spoken, Rome was a mighty power in the world. She had already subdued the strong and conquer and hold the world. She had already defeated most of the nations of the earth. Her military power had brought all nations under her power. Jesus, being mindful of all this power, pointed out that might doesn't always make right and that it is not the powerful military that will inherit the earth; but it is to be inherited by the meek.

This was a strange statement and a bold one to make, and yet Jesus said it. It is as strange today

as it was then because man still thinks in terms of power.

I wonder, do we really believe that the meek shall inherit the earth? Read Psalms 37:1-11.

We need to notice three things about the meek.

I. DEFINITION OF THE MEEK

Don't ever equate meekness with weakness. Jesus is not talking about the weak; but the meek. There is a big difference.

Most people think of a meek person as one who accepts fate without question, one who is full of spirit, a passive sort of person who never lifts a finger to conquer or to achieve. Meekness is not weakness.

Meekness is strength under control. It literally means "saddle broke" (tamed to ride). It is the picture of a wild horse running free with all his strength, power, cunning, speed, and endurance, out of control. One day a man lays a rope around the neck of the wild horse, brings him in to the lot, saddles him, mounts him, and breaks him. However, in breaking him he doesn't break his spirit. The horse is still just as swift, strong, powerful as before, but now this energy and intelligence is brought under control of a master. The animal is meek but not weak.

Meek people, i.e. people who have been brought under the master's control, those who have surrendered their wills to His will, those who have been spiritually domesticated, those who serve God to the disregard of his own interest--these are the ones who will inherit the earth. A meek person is God controlled rather than self-controlled. Great men of history have been under divine authority. Moses was very meek above all men which were upon the face of the earth, Numbers 12:3. Yet, think of what God did through this man. No one could say that Moses was weak.

Paul is another example of one who had been "saddle broke." Hear Paul say, "I laboured more abundantly than they all" I Cor. 15:10. Paul served God with the same energy and zeal that he used when he served Satan. God had brought his energies under control. Salvation didn't kill his zeal.

II. DISPOSITION OF THE MEEK

The meek person is a strange creature because he is so unlike his contemporaries. He will not be a part to strife nor will he stir up trouble. He will not try to avenge himself knowing that vengeance belongeth to God. He will sacrifice his own rights if necessary choosing to suffer affliction rather than to cause others to suffer. He seems to be at everybody's mercy and is destined to have nothing since he is imposed upon by so many. From a human point of view he is bound to lose, but from a heavenly point of view he is bound to win.

III. DELIGHT OF THE MEEK

1. The meek will delight in His Word.
Psalm 1:1,3 "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly ... but his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night . . ."
2. The meek will delight in His Inheritance.
He will inherit the earth. God, in his wisdom, has arranged the really good things of this earth to fit only the nature of the meek person. Only the meek have the spiritual capacity to enjoy the things of life. The abundant life that Jesus gives is only for the meek.

There is also a deeper spiritual inheritance that Peter says is, "incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you," I Peter 1:4.

"The wicked shall increase their joy in the earth." Isa. 29:13a. God rewards the proud who give their grace to the humble.

What should we say to these things? Seek ye the Lord, all ye meek of the earth which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness . . . for the Lord liftest up the meek and casteth the wicked down.

Matt. 11:28-29 - "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest for your souls."

4th Beatitude - Happiness is for those who hunger.
Scripture - Matt. 5:6 "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled."

INTRODUCTION:

This is the fourth in our series of studies on the beatitudes. Have you noticed how they are tied together? First, there is a man who sees his spiritual condition and comes to the Lord for help. He becomes a Christian whose character and nature is brought under submission to the master, and now he hungers and thirsts for righteousness.

To really be hungry is a terrible thing to experience. Few, if any, of us have ever experienced real hunger. Our country is not starving for food.

It is even difficult for us to picture a starving man. Eddie Rickenbacker, in a very graphic way, tells how he and his companion in a life raft lost at sea, ate raw fish and prayed for rain. Also, Mrs. Don Kim a Korean war prisoner of the Japanese describes the miserable conditions that she and others suffered while confined in such small quarters. They caught and ate rats and picked the little ice formations from their ceiling to get water. Many died of starvation and exposure.

A starving person wants food more than anything else in the world. Under starvation conditions, one would gladly pay a fortune for a loaf of bread.

Yes, hunger is a terrible experience but I am told that a person can live longer without food than he can without water. Jesus knew that hunger and thirst was a common thing in his part of the world. Water is a scarce thing in the Holy Land. The hot winds and blowing sand could parch a throat, scorch the skin and cause the lips to crack open and bleed.

It was a common thing for people to actually die of hunger and thirst. So, Jesus uses this to illustrate the value of hungering and thirsting after righteousness. A soul without Christ is like a man dying from hunger and thirst. Without physical food and drink the body dies. Without spiritual food and drink the soul dies.

It is easy enough to tell when one is physically hungry and thirsty but it is difficult to sense a spiritual need. In fact, it is possible for a person, or a church (Laodicea, for example in Revelation 3) to be wretched, miserable, poor, blind, naked, and not even know it.

I. OBSTACLES TO OVERCOME IN HUNGERING AND THIRSTING OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

1. He must recognize his own imperfection Phil. 3:12-13. Paul said he had not yet attained. However, he was pressing forward toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.
2. Self-righteousness must be recognized for what it is - "filthy rags."

One must come to the point in life when he is tired of existing only for the world, the flesh, and the devil, and turn to seek the things which are above.

Augustine said that man is made for God and his soul will never find rest until it rests in Him.

Nothing short of Christ will ever satisfy man's deepest longing and greatest need.

II. THE OBJECT FOR WHICH MEN ARE TO HUNGER AND THIRST

Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for what? ... Righteousness. This has top priority "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness." How much are we to want it? More than anything else on earth. We are to crave it, seek it, search for it, just as a man starving to death for food and water.

A man starving for food wants food more than anything. A man hungering for righteousness wants it more than anything else in the world. Righteousness is the object for which man is to hunger. He is to search for it with all his might - He is to put it first in his search - and he is to want it just as a starving man wants food. When he meets these conditions the outcome will be gratifying.

III. THE OUTCOME OF HUNGERING AND THIRSTING FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS

"He shall be filled," says verse six.

Filled is a word used for the fattening of an animal in a stall. It means to be "Gorged." The man who hungered for the righteousness of God as a man who is starving for food will be completely filled. In fact he will be gorged with the generosity of God's righteousness.

On one hand you have starving and on the other you have gorging. The divine provision is equal to the human craving. There is a generosity in God's provision rather than a bare minimum. If a man is starving for God's righteousness and is seeking it first, God doesn't give just a small amount. He gives in super-abundance. Our needs are more than supplied.

Yes, blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be filled.

5th Beatitude - Happiness is for those who Pity.
Scripture - Matt. 5:7 "Blessed are the merciful:
for they shall obtain mercy."

INTRODUCTION:

Paul in writing to Timothy (I Tim. 1:1-2) says in the salutation, "To Timothy, my son in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father, and Jesus Christ our Lord."

He repeats this in his second letter to Timothy, "To Timothy, my dearly beloved son: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord."

To Titus, he says - "To Titus, mine own son after the common faith: Grace, mercy, and peace from God..."

II John 3 "Grace be with you, mercy, and peace from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ."

Jude - "May mercy, peace, and love be multiplied unto you."

Grace, mercy, and peace is a statement of principle that runs throughout the New Testament. This trilogy is vitally linked together in a way that cannot be broken. It tells us that there can be no peace without mercy and no mercy without grace.

So, the message before us has to do with a beatitude of mercy - "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy." This is a word of kindness and pity. It is more than just to sympathize with or to feel sorry for. It means to actually enter into the experiences that another person is experiencing. It is to be identified with the other person in his problems.

It is like the old proverb which says - "Don't criticize the other person until you have walked a mile in his shoes."

God, in Christ Jesus, did this for us. "God was in thirst, in the world, reconciling the world unto himself." He put himself in our place and can understand our feelings of frustration, fear, and frailties.

I. THE REASONS FOR MERCY

1. We need to show mercy because we have received mercy.

Compare Matt. 18:23ff to see how one man was forgiven so much while he in turn would not have mercy and pity on the poor man who owed him so little.

We need to remember that it was not by works of righteousness which we have done but according to his mercy hath he saved us. Paul in Romans 12:1 speaks of the mercies of God.

2. What God is to us we should be to others, and what we are to others God will be to us.

He taught us to pray - Forgive us - As we forgive ... For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your father forgive your trespasses. Matt. 6:12-15.

3. We need to show mercy because of the fruit of the spirit. Galatians 5:22-23 says that this attribute is part of the fruit of the spirit.

If genuine mercy was shown to all men it would help to cure much of the world's ills. By showing mercy to those of physical need we might be permitted by them to then demonstrate mercy for their spiritual needs.

"Do justice to the afflicted and needy." Psalm 82:3. Also, Proverbs 21:13 - "Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall himself, but shall not be heard."

Read Psalm 136 to see how it is repeated the "His mercy endureth forever."

II. THE REQUIREMENT FOR MERCY

Mercy is an attribute of God and of Christ. It should be ours. Read Hebrews 2:16-17. He is our merciful High Priest.

Micah asks the question - "What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" Here it is required that those who have received mercy show mercy. God told Hosea "I desire mercy and not sacrifice."

Matt. 23:23 - Judgment, mercy, and faith are called the weightier matters of the law, and Luke 6:36 says "Be ye therefore merciful as your father also is merciful."

III. THE REWARD OF MERCY

Our text says - "Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy."

Mercy is the reward of the merciful. Mercy obtained depends upon mercy rendered.

James 2:13 - "He that sheweth no mercy shall have judgment without mercy."

The Publican prayed - God be merciful to me a sinner. He was pleading for mercy; and I might add - We need mercy more than justice. It is mercy we crave. And since all men crave mercy we should be ready to help relieve that craving.

The Psalmist prayed - "Have mercy upon me O God according to thy loving kindness, according to the multitude of tender mercies blot out my transgressions." Psalm 51:1

And of course that great Shepherd Psalm 23 closes with this assurance of reward - "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

6th Beatitude - Happiness is for the Pure.

Scripture - Matt. 5:8 "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."

INTRODUCTION:

Christianity is a heart religion and salvation is

a heart matter. This does not enough. The Christian religion must be a heart matter.

I. THE PROBLEM MAN HAS

The heart is the seat of wickedness. As a man thinketh in his heart so is he. The Pharisees had a religion of legalism that touched everything except the heart. They worked from the outside in rather than from the inside out. They made their play for the praise of men rather than God.

One tragic mistake of our day is to think that man's basic trouble is his environment. The theory is change the environment and this will change the man. We need to remember that Adam and Eve went wrong in Eden (the world's most perfect environment).

Note how the heart is evil. Genesis 6:5 "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth and that every imagination of his heart was only evil continually."

Genesis 8:21 - "The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth."

Isaiah 29:13 - "This people draw near me with their mouth but they have removed their heart far from me."

Jeremiah 17:9 - "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked."

Jeremiah 5:23 - "This people have a revolting and a rebellious heart."

The problem of man is that his heart is desperately wicked.

Note how wickedness proceeds from the heart.

Matt. 5:19 - "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, etc. These are the things that defile the man."

Matt. 5:28 - "There is a matter of committing adultery in the heart."

Matt. 13:15 - "This people's heart is waxed gross, and their eyes have been closed."

Ezekiel 33:31 - "For with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness."

Acts 8:21 Simon the magician tried to buy the power of the Holy Spirit and Peter said - "Thou has neither part nor lot in this matter for thy heart is not right in the sight of God." The problem of man is his wicked heart but God has a plan to overcome or cleanse the heart."

II. THE PLAN GOD HAS

God's plan is to make the wicked heart pure - Blessed are the pure in heart.

Pure means to be free from any alloy or foreign matter. In this case it includes being without hypocrisy.

The heart must be without defilement for nothing defiled shall enter heaven.

The heart must be made pure. Acts 8:37 the eunuch wanted to be baptized - Philip said, "If thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest."

The greatest commandment is thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart.

Proverbs 3:5-6 "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, etc." Eph. 6:6 says we are to do the will of God from the heart.

Ezekiel 36:26 God said, "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you. And I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh."

Only God can cleanse and purify the heart. We can draw nigh unto him. We can yield, search, desire, seek, etc. but it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

It is impossible for one to live a pure life until he has a pure heart; and a person will never have a pure heart until God purifies it. When he purifies a human heart it is for a purpose.

III. THE PURPOSE OF GOD'S PLAN WILL BRING TO MEN

God's purpose is that we may see God. Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God. Only those who have clean hands and a pure heart can come before him.

What does it mean to see God? It doesn't mean that one can at this time actually and visibly see God with their physical eyes. This is a spiritual sight. We walk by faith and not by sight; but faith is spiritual sight. In a spiritual sense the Christian sees God. He sees him through the eyes of faith.

Examples - Moses endured as seeing him who is invisible. Abraham rejoiced to see my day and saw it and was glad. Now we see in a glass darkly, then face to face.

John said we shall see him as he is.

You and I have an appointment with destiny— It will be to our advantage to approach eternity with clean hands and a pure heart.

7th Beatitude - Happiness is for the Peacemaker.

Scripture - Matt. 5:9 "Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God." Read also John 14:27-31.

INTRODUCTION:

This is a beatitude that is concerned with peace and makers of peace. The world knows very little about peace since we have been caught up in wars and rumors of wars all of our lives.

One historian states that from 1480 to 1941 Great Britain has had 78 wars, France 71, Spain 64, Russia 61, Austria 52, Germany 23, China 11, Japan 9, U.S. 13. In the last 4000 years there has been less than 300 years of world peace. War never creates peace; it can only create strife, poverty, disease, and a desire for revenge which leads to other wars.

But let us consider four things from this beatitude.

I. THE MEANING OF PEACE

Peace has a double meaning. The Greek is "Eirene" and the Hebrew is "Shalom."

Peace is a form of greeting such as Jesus used when he said to his disciples - "Peace". In the Holy Land today you will be greeted with the word Shalom. Sometimes they will say it twice - "Shalom, Shalom." They mean by this; I not only hope that all trouble is absent from your life but also I hope for you a double portion of everything that makes life worth living. Bible peace is not simply the absence of problems but the presence of good.

II. THE MATTERS OF PEACE

What all is involved in this matter of making peace?

1. Peace with man.

Luke 2:14 - "Peace on earth good will toward men." Romans 12:18 - "If it be possible as much as lieth in you, live at peace with all men." Recompence to no man evil for evil.

2. Peace with self.

Personal peace is sometimes hard to obtain simply because we ask God to forgive us while we carry a grudge against ourselves. If God has forgiven us of sin then we should have the peace that passeth understanding. But

too often we are not willing to forgive ourselves as God has forgiven us.

The person who is disturbed needs peace and calm. Jesus said, "Thy faith hath saved saved thee, go and sin no more."

Those who are bewildered and uncertain need peace. The disciples when they learned about the resurrection were excited and bewildered. Jesus appeared and said, "Peace be unto you."

3. Peace with God.

This is the secret of inner peace with self as well as outer peace toward others.

"Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God." Romans 5:1. God and men reconciled.

Blessed indeed is the man who has experienced peace with others, with self, but most of all with God.

III. THE MAKERS OF PEACE

The blessing is not for the people who love peace, or want peace, or long for peace. The blessing is for the one who makes peace. Blessed are the peacemakers.

Paul said to be spiritually minded is peace. (Rom. 8:6). Also, let us follow after the things that make for peace. Rom. 14:19. Those who would sow discord among the brethren are doing the work of Satan, for Satan is a disturber of the peace.

The person who works for peace and who would be willing to yield his own rights for the sake of fellowship is doing the work of God. The blessing is for this person, for as a child of God he is doing the will of God.

IV. THE MASTER OF PEACE

Jesus is the master of peace. He brought peace to nature when he commanded the storm—"Peace be still." (Mark 4:39)

He brought peace to demon possessed man of Gadara when he calmed him, clothed him, and restored his mind. (Luke 8)

Jesus came to bring peace to man because the world has no peace to offer. And while the world is tearing itself apart with strife, greed, hatred, and a thousand other things the Christian has a peace that passeth understanding. If we abide in him as he abides in us then inner calm does not depend upon outer circumstances. One may live on the fat of the land or in the lap of luxury and be miserable. On the other hand, the real child of God may live in poverty or wasted away in a dark dungeon, as did Paul, but all the while there is this peace that Jesus gives.

How can we explain this? Christ is the only source of peace. He is the prince of peace.

Christ does not give you peace - He is your peace. Eph. 2:14. "For he is our peace." He does not give you victory - He is your victory. "Thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory through Christ Jesus our Lord."

He does not give you hope - He is your hope. "Christ in you the hope of glory." He does not give you life - He is your life. "I am the way, the truth, and the life."

The person who has made peace with God and is dedicated to helping others to enter into this same peace is doing the work of God. The blessing of this beatitude is reserved for him.

8th Beatitude - Happiness is for the Persecuted.
Scripture - Matt. 5:10-12 "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."

INTRODUCTION:

This is the eighth and last of our studies in the beatitudes. These beatitudes are not separate and distinct from each other. They are actually tied together like the links of a chain. Taking them all together here is what we have: The person who recognizes his spiritual poverty and mourns over his spiritual need and thus yielding to the master will be brought under God's control. As a result he will hunger and thirst for righteousness, seeking to be merciful and pure in heart, desiring peace for all as he himself has experienced it. However, in all probability this type of person, because he is misunderstood, will be persecuted. Most of us don't know anything about physical persecution but I would remind you that there are dozens of ways a person can be persecuted.

There are three things for us to notice about this beatitude.

I. THE PROPHECY ABOUT PERSECUTION

This statement - "Blessed are they which are persecuted" seems to be a statement of fact - you will be persecuted. Jesus said, the prophets before you were persecuted, so, don't think it strange or unusual when persecution comes to you. Why should you escape if others have had to suffer?

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee." Matt. 23:37. Every apostle except John

died in a violent death. The blood of martyrs is the seed of the church.

Zechariah was stoned because he preached a sermon accusing the people of breaking the commandments. II Chronicles 24:20-21.

Paul was no stranger to persecution. He was driven out of Antioch, was stoned at Lystra, and had to flee from Iconium. He was imprisoned, beaten, robbed, shipwrecked, fought wild beasts, and was finally executed. Why? He was persecuted for righteousness sake. You would expect the unrighteous to be persecuted but it is just the opposite. Why? Because when one becomes a Christian his ways and life are in conflict with that of the world and this causes trouble.

Paul is convinced that the person who lives a Godly life will encounter persecution - Hear him as he writes to Timothy, "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."

However, Paul is just convinced that it is better to suffer for the cause of Christ than it is for the cause of Christ to suffer on your account. He said, I count the loss of all things as dross that I might win Christ.

II. THE PERSECUTED

It is difficult for twentieth century Christians to realize what first century Christians had to suffer. Their whole life and livelihood was affected. Many lost or gave up their jobs because they were in conflict with the principles of the Christian faith. One man who had become a Christian was struggling with the problem of compromising his Christian principle in order to keep his work which was for a pagan cause. He was trying to rationalize his position to Tertullian and said - "What shall I do, I must live?" But Tertullian replied - "Must you live?" Many people today are making a similar argument trying to justify themselves by saying, "after all, I've

got to live." But Tertullian would answer, "not necessarily." Early Christians had to choose between loyalty and a living. Their social, home, economic, and political life was disrupted.

In addition to this they were physically persecuted. They fought wild beast . . . were burned at the stake.

I read somewhere that Nero covered the early Christians with pitch and made human torches out of them to light the arenas where others fought animals. They were tortured on the rack . . . their eyes were torn out . . . and many other forms of torture were endured. Why? Because they were a righteous people. It is so strange that the best people who ever lived were so mistreated.

What about our generation and our brand of Christianity? First, ours may not be the kind of Christian living that will cause persecution. It is not likely that many of us will lose our lives or suffer physical persecution for Christ. However, insults, mockery, and other mental abuses will be experienced by the person who stands for that which is genuinely Christian.

Someone asked the question - How can I cast off the world? The answer was given - Live for Christ and the world will cast you off.

III, THE PROMISE

Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven. There is the promise of heaven itself. These sufferers are classified with the prophets in hearing. "Well done! Thou good and faithful servant."

"MISSIONS-RELATED ISSUES"
(Acts 13:1-16; 14:18-28)
A PBS Chapel Sermon

Henry Silber

Introduction:

A minister of a certain church was strongly challenging his congregation to support missions. One church member objected by saying: "I don't approve of missions." The minister responded by saying: "You know for certain that the Bible tells us to go into all the world and preach the Gospel, to heal the sick, to feed the hungry, to help the poor." "Maybe so, but can't we find something cheaper than missionaries to support?," declared the church member.

Is this not the kind of attitude some of the people in the church have toward missions? The foremost important issue seems to be money. As a result, church people are turned off toward missions because they have never faced the issues related with missions.

What are the issues raised by missions? What are the answers given by missions? What applications can be made to these issues in our churches today?

There have been debates as to what agency should have the responsibility of sending missionaries. Some would contend that the local church be the sole agency to send missionaries. Antioch church is cited as a model. Others say that it is the responsibility of the association or convention of churches to send missionaries. Still others would declare that the churches or convention of churches through their constituted mission board/societies should have this responsibility. Who sends missionaries?

Since Antioch is somewhat a model church for understanding modern mission work, we shall see what applications relate to current missions issues.

I. FIRSTLY, LET US LOOK AT THE ISSUE RELATED TO THE PHILOSOPHY OF MISSIONS

The first issue which relates to missions has to do with the philosophy of missions. Do we have any stated philosophy of missions? What is our philosophy of missions?

The philosophy of missions of the Antioch church come as the outgrowth of her understanding of the mandate of missions. This mandate is found in Acts 1:8 where Jesus said: "You shall be witnesses unto me—unto the uttermost parts of the earth." The issue, therefore, is the Great Commission based on the mandate.

Like the Antioch church of old, each Christian church today is mandated to go, to preach, to teach, to win, to baptize and disciple.

Look at the church of Antioch (13:1-3). It had a tremendous leadership. It had a ministry of prayer and fasting. The believers were in tune with the Holy Spirit.

The Antioch church was a church with a vision. What was its vision? We read this in Acts 13:2. The vision was the work confronting them. There was the immensity of work before them. The church was set to take the greatest step of all steps. The church had now decided to take the Gospel message out into all the world. It was a vision of conquest of sin. It was a vision undertaken under the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

The church in Antioch had also a strategy. What was its strategy? The strategy grew out of her vision. The strategy involved releasing Barnabas and Saul by the Holy Spirit for the work to which the Holy Spirit had called them (13:2). It was a spiritual strategy. It came from the Holy Spirit.

What has this to do with us today? Philosophically, the issue is still the same today as it was during the time of the Antioch church. The church has a mandate.

What does this suggest? If the church is mandated to go and send missionaries, the church must secure resources to support those whom they send.

The local church must provide the means to carry out the mandate. The local churches must get involved in the vision and strategy of worldwide conquest of sin and evil. It must find, teach, and train persons for the mission ministry. This brings us to the second issue in missions.

II. THE SECOND ISSUE WHICH RELATES TO MISSIONS HAS TO DO WITH PEOPLE (13:1)

If the first issue is to be a witness to the ends of the earth, some have to plant the seeds. This requires people. Where do we get people? Philippine Baptist churches are rich with people. We can share people. This is the greatest wealth of our churches.

Usually, when we speak of sending missionaries for missionary career, we always look to the Seminaries, Bible schools, Bible colleges as places to find missionaries. These are good places to get people to become missionaries because of the training they provide to those who will be involved in missionary work. And I would like to challenge our theological education schools as I challenge myself to accept the demands of mission education.

But the seminaries, Bible colleges, and Bible schools are not the only places to look for missionaries. In Acts 13:1, the Antioch church found the answer. There were prophets and teachers in the church. These leaders were already ministering to the Lord.

We need to look for men and women in the church who have demonstrated the spiritual gifts of prophets (proclaimers) and teachers. They were all in the church in Antioch. They were exercising their gifts. They were not new Christians, I would like to think. They were tested and proven prophets and teachers. They came with credentials of recognition by the believers in the church.

LII. THE THIRD ISSUE WHICH RELATES TO MISSIONS HAS TO DO WITH PERFORMANCE (Acts 13:4ff; 14:26-28).

Being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, Cyprus, Salamis, Paphos, etc. (13:4ff). In Acts 14:26-28 it says: "And from there they sailed to Antioch, for they had been commanded to the grace of God for the work which they had accomplished. "And when they arrived and gathered the church together, they began to report all things that God had done with them and how he had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles. And they spent a long time with the disciples."

Once a church, association, or convention of churches had sent a man for service under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, that man was accountable to the church, association, or convention that sent him. Accountability is being responsible to another for one's activity and actions. The issue then has to do with performance.

To whom is the missionary accountable? And for what is he accountable? The answer is: The missionaries were responsible and accountable to the one that sent them out. For what are they accountable? for their accomplishments. They share these to the church/association/convention to bless and encourage those that sent them out.

What should they report? In the case of the Antioch church, they reported both the bad and good news. Barnabas and Paul no doubt told of John Mark's failure (13:13). They probably reported what happened in the city of Antioch, how they were driven out of the city (13:49-52). Paul related how he was stoned and left for dead (14:19).

But there was also the Good News, how that at Paphos the proconsul believed (13:4-12). In Iconium they were able to demonstrate the power of God through signs and wonders (14:1-3). They reported those things that would bless the believers that heard their reports. This suggests that they were responsible

accountable to share the successes as well as the failure of their performance.

In churches we see this kind of accountability. Don't we require our Baptist churches to make reports? Don't we have council meetings? Sunday school meetings Do these meetings not provide for accountability? We are responsible to each other for the success as well as failures. Should the missionaries we send be any different? The church needs their reports, letters, and periodic visits so they can be accountable for their performance.

The Baguio Baptist Missions Society for these past years have been sending missionaries to the North-eastern part of Luzon in the persons of the Danny Muegos, the Romeo Migueles, and now the Danny Almarios. From time to time the Society asks them to submit their reports to the society of their performance.

IV. THE LAST ISSUE WHICH RELATES TO MISSIONS HAS SOMETHING TO DO WITH PROVISION: PESOS (13:3).

This is suggested by verse three. If the philosophy of worldwide missions demands people, then it becomes obvious that those sent should have their needs provided. They should be supported by prayers plus funds.

I know it was expensive to send a missionary to another town, city or country. Someone had to pay for the missionaries. Today, where will the support come from? Could we expect the Sorianoas, Cojuangcos or Ayalas for that matter to support our missionaries?

Where will the money come from? The answer is: The support should come from the churches. In Antioch, the church was exhorted to "set apart" Saul and Barnabas. This actually meant that the believers released them to go. They were released from their present responsibilities of ministry in the church to go to places as missionaries. The responsibility today therefore, of supporting them should fall on those who send them as their missionaries. Otherwise, they will have the responsibility of finding support for them-

selves just like Paul who was both a missionary and a tentmaker. Once a missionary is sent, someone has to hold the ropes.

The account in Acts 13 does not say directly that the Antioch Christians supported those that they sent but it is certainly understood. They laid their hands on them and identified with them. This involved some sort of support.

The churches should be involved in the support of missionary personnel. We Baptists cherish our freedom and independence. We insist that every Baptist Church is autonomous and self-governing charged with the responsibility of charting its own destiny under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. But this is just one side of our personality. As Baptists, we know how to cooperate together to get things done.

If Baptists in the Philippines are serious in their commitment to Jesus Christ and to the Great Commission, then we must be united in carrying out the mandate. This inescapable responsibility falls afresh and anew to each one of us as well as to every generation of Baptists in the Philippines. Our associations and convention live on the voluntary cooperation of churches. If we want our mission program to succeed then we must cooperate. Let us make cooperation a top priority for missions. If our goal is to reach and expand then we must be involved in the stewardship of cooperative giving. No one church will be able to do everything it wants to do. We need the cooperation of every Baptist Church. Each church decides how much percentage it can give to the cause of missions and we shall let our Convention of Churches manage the gifts. Let us trust them with this responsibility.

We need a practical plan that will give form and substance to our mission commitment. I'm sure you, like me, are dissatisfied with people who continuously appeal for special causes.

We need a program and not a strong preacher for missions. Experience has told us that projects or

institutions that could employ the most eloquent and persuasive speaker would be the most successful in raising funds. A better plan is a cooperative program. If we have a cooperative program, we will be guided by the response to the program and not be dependent on the eloquence and persuasion of good speakers. Let us begin talking about us. We should be together in attitude and relationships toward cooperation. There must emerge a "one work" concept if our mission program will ever succeed.

CONCLUSION

To cooperate means to unite our forces and our resources, and our plans—all of us together, now—toward the same goals and the same direction. Missions is a family affair.

I would like to close my message with a story told by a Brazilian Baptist named Nelson Fanini. He said:

A man brought a pair of pants, but they were much too long to be of any use. He arrived at his house and asked his wife to cut 8 centimeters off. She agreed to do but forgot. After two or three days, he then asked his mother-in-law to do it. She said that she would do it but she also forgot.

One day the wife remembered and cut the pants off by 8 centimeters. Two days later, the mother-in-law also remembered and cut another 8 centimeters off the pants.

The following Sunday morning, the man put on the trousers but alas, they were too much short. It is easy to see that both women said "Yes." Both of them fulfilled their word and both worked well—but they did not cooperate.

Let us cooperate. The task of missions is too important.

A FILIPINO LOOK AT PAUL'S DOCTRINE OF ADOPTION

Roberto E. Betia, Jr.

Paul in his letters took "great pictures from ordinary life everyday to show to men what Jesus Christ has done."¹ Adoption was one of these pictures. An analogy was drawn from "family life to express what God in Jesus Christ did for man."² Concerning the analogies of Paul, Gale observes:

It is extremely surprising . . . that relatively little comparable consideration has been given to the analogies of Paul . . . The absence of more direct and more comprehensive treatment of Pauline analogies is particularly remarkable in view of the fact that some of these analogies have played an extremely important role in the formulation and expression of many important theological ideas and doctrines.³

When Paul used word-pictures, his main concern was to illustrate the work of Christ for man in different ways that were understandable to his readers. Unfortunately, the illustration soon developed into theological terms and dogmas. The development is attributed to the attempt of Christian theologians to systematize Christian beliefs. "Adoption" soon became a term borrowed solely from Paul to illustrate the salvation experience.

Since adoption deals with family relations, the concept would gain the attention of Filipinos. In the

¹ William Barclay, The Mind of Paul (New York: Harper and Row, 1958), p. 75.

² Ibid., p. 90.

³ Herbert M. Gale, The Use of Analogy in the Letters of Paul (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1964), p. 7.

unique kinship of the Filipino system, the Filipino family is commonly described as being "closely-knit."⁴ This fact is demonstrated in the political, social and economic life of the Philippines. The basic political unit in the country has been changed from barrio to barangay. The latter term was used originally to refer to a kinship unit.⁵ In economics "nearly ninety per cent of all Filipino corporations are tightly-held family corporations."⁶ Socially, a prevalence of extended families has been noted in urban areas. In 1963 an urban study was conducted by the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Ateneo de Manila, on family and kinship. The study revealed that sixty per cent of the household had a non-nuclear family living with them as members of the household.⁷ On the other hand, in spite of one's legal entry within the family circle, adoption is viewed negatively by Filipinos; it is not a desired or honored relationship. Until a person is genuinely accepted by family

⁴ Roberto Sucgang, "Cultural and Value Factors Affecting Groups and Social Group Practice in the Philippines," A Symposium on the Philippine Scene Appraised: Its Challenge to Social Work (Manila: Philippine Association of Social Workers, 1965), p. 56.

⁵ F. Landa Jocano, Philippine Prehistory: An Anthropological Overview of the Beginnings of Philippine Society (Quezon City: Philippine Center for Advanced Studies, University of the Philippines System, 1975), p. 173.

⁶ Richard Poethig, "The Philippine Urban Family," Acculturations in the Philippines, eds. Peter Gowing and William Henry Scott (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1971), p. 227.

⁷ John Carroll, Changing Patterns of Social Structure in the Philippines 1966-1963 (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila Press, 1968), p. 134.

members he is looked upon as a stranger.⁸ Acceptance is not easily attained. Sometimes this acceptance is never attained. Adoption signifies a second rate relationship in Filipino culture.

In the mind of the Apostle Paul, the concept of adoption brings to mind the profound and beautiful relationship a person can have with God as Father through the Lord Jesus Christ. Adoption to Paul was a fitting illustration of his own personal relationship with God. This being accepted, one can ask how a biblical word with such beautiful meaning can be used in a culture that looks down on the relationship to which it refers. How can this concept be of interest to Filipinos who desire to have a personal relationship with God? How can adoption be expressed attractively in Filipino Theology?

PHILIPPINE SOCIOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF ADOPTION

Philippine laws give legality to adoption. In actual practice, this legality does not guarantee full social acceptance. Adoption in the Philippines is viewed in society quite differently than in the courts.

Some Adoption Cases

The practice of adoption among Filipinos is rare. The concept is understood diversely in different areas. Among the people of the mountain provinces in North Luzon, for example, adoption is almost pre-existent. In a study conducted among this group in 1961, only one instance of legal

⁸Ibid., p. 136.

adoption was found.⁹ The rarity is probably a result of an earlier custom. In the past, if a mother died in child birth, the child was usually buried with the mother, otherwise it starved to death.¹⁰ However, this custom is no longer practiced.¹¹ Relatives often care for the child. The siblings of the father take the child and, in some instances, the mother's family may care for the child.¹¹

In the Visayans, adoption is more frequent than in North Luzon. Out of the one hundred twenty-nine families in a northeastern community in Leyte, five adopted children were found.¹² The researchers did not, however, indicate the kind of adoption.

An interesting type of adoption is noted in a town in Central Panay in the Iloilo province. A family adopted an old man into their family. According to the investigation conducted, "a friend or any farm helper of good standing with a family may be taken as a member of the household until old age. . . ."¹³ The report indicates that no legal procedure was involved nor were privileges of legal adoption, such as heirship or use of the adopter's surname, conferred. At most, acceptance within the family was given a reward for services faithfully

⁹ Harriet Reynolds and Lilian Keyes, "The Isneg Family," The Isneg of the Northern Philippines: Study of Trends of Change and Development, ed. Hubert Reynolds and Fern Babcock Grant (Dumaguete City: Anthropology Museum, Silliman University, 1973), p. 111.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ethel Nurje, Life in a Leyte Village (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1965), p. 50.

¹³ F. Lenda Jocano, Growing Up in a Philippine Barrio (Manila: G. Miranda and Sons, 1971), p. 79.

rendered to the family or in view of the fact that the old man had no known relatives to live with for the remaining years of his life.

Moreover, in the same general area of Central Panay mountain tribal groups, the Sulods, have placed adoption within their social system. Among the inhabitants of this tribe, the birth of a child "formalizes" the family. In other words, a married couple is not considered a family until they experience themselves the birth of a child. Unlike the situation in North Luzon where childlessness is a major reason for divorce, childlessness in Central Panay is not looked upon with contempt. The couple may resort to divorce, but they tend to keep their marriage intact. "Remedial measures, such as adoption, are immediately instituted." The relationship between the foster parents and the adopted child is like the relationship between the parents and a natural child. "Kinship terms used normally between biological children and their parents are also employed by the adopted children when talking to or about their foster parents." Behaviour patterns expected between parents and child are also expected between adoptive parents and the adopted child.

In Panay, therefore, adoption fulfills the condition necessary for a social unit to function as a family. Data on the frequency of adoption cases was not indicated in the report.

¹⁴ F. Landa Jocano, Salod Society (Quezon City: Univ. of the Philippines Press, 1968), p. 130.

¹⁵ William Henry Scott, On the Cordillera: A Look at the Peoples and Culture of the Mountain Province (Manila: M.C.S. Enterprise, Inc., 1969), p. 102.

¹⁶ Jocano, Salod Society, op. cit., p. 276.

¹⁷ Bid., p. 130.

In Southern Philippines adoption is also practiced. Among the Manuvus, a tribal group in Central Mindanao, adoption (annaton, as they call it) is practiced, though rarely, among well-to-do families.¹⁸ Among the reasons given for adoption are: the need to enlarge the family, childlessness, or old age.

Adoption can be done only if both the husband and the wife are alive. In the event of the death of one of the couple, the surviving partner joins the family of the eldest married daughter. A ritual is performed in adoption. Gift-giving is a part of the ritual. The natural parents receive the gift especially if the adopted is a girl, since it is the adoptive parents that now received the dowry in case the adopted daughter gets married. When the adopted is a boy, the natural parents are freed from the burden of securing a dowry for the son.¹⁹

A form of adoption, practiced in the Sulu area, is called saw duro. Literally it means "one who shares the nipple."²⁰ This happens when a woman with an infant takes a child of another woman, usually a neighbor, and offers her breast to feed the hungry baby whose mother is away. Because of the humanitarian act, the child whom she feeds is "adopted" into her family. Her children consider the child a brother or sister. The siblings of the child, however, are not considered in the same relationship. The adopted does not possess any property rights, but only social privileges. He "is invited to all

¹⁸E. Arsenio Manuel, Manuvo Social Organization (Ouezon City: Community Development Research Council, University of the Philippines, 1973), p. 66.

¹⁹*Ibid.*

²⁰Juanito Bruno, The Social World of the Tausugs: A Study in Philippine Culture and Education (Manila: Centro Escolar University Research and Development Center, 1975), p. 62.

occasions which involve a member of his adoptive family. He is introduced to relatives who may not be aware of the relationship.²¹

The Prospects of Adoption

Adoption is an accepted practice among Filipinos. However, in the light of Filipino family composition and kinship system. Adoption in a legal sense is highly unlikely to occur. The kinship system prevents the intrusion of a non-kin into the group. The maxim, "Blood is thicker than water," holds true for Filipino behaviour.

Very few Filipino children are available for adoption. In 1974, only 304²² children were available for adoption from recognized child placement agencies in Manila, a city which had 1,473,557²³ population. A typical child is surrounded by about 200 relatives both from his father's and his mother's families. Normally, there is someone among relatives who is willing to take care of orphans because "affectional ties are strong" among Filipino families.²⁴

The Philippines has one of the world's highest population growths. She ranks fourteen among the

²¹ Ibid.

²² Blanca Detwin-Molledo, "This Child I to Myself Will Take," Expressweek (May 2, 1974), p. 43.

²³ Efren Yambot (ed.), Philippine Almanac and Handbook of Facts (Quezon City: Philippine Almanac Printers, Inc., 1975), p. 9.

²⁴ Jacob Cuiambae, "The Filipino Family and Society," Readings on Philippine Culture and Social Life, (eds.) Amparo Lardizabal and Felicitas Tensua-Leogardo (Makati: Rex Book Store, 1976), p. 90.

list. The Philippine government has initiated a massive family planning campaign and program. Despite the efforts, no significant decline in the birth rate has so far been observed.²⁵ In the Philippines, "an average of three babies are born every minute."²⁶ On the other hand, fewer children are desired by Filipino couples. Previously a family has had an average of seven children, but now four children are preferred with at least two males to carry the name of the family.²⁷ Although a smaller family is desired, "not many parents do anything to limit the number."²⁸ Childlessness, therefore, is not a major problem among Filipinos to lead them to adoption.

The adopted child faces difficulties in his family relations with his adoptive parent. The law provides that he be given rights and duties as though he were a legitimate child. The adopted has no relations with the other family members of his foster parent. The relation stops with the adoptive parent.

The relationship established by the adoption is limited to the adopting parents and does not extend to other relatives except as provided by law.

Thus the adoptive child cannot be considered as a relative of the ascendants and collaterals of the adopting parents nor of

²⁵ Noli de los Angeles, "Marriage and Fertility Patterns in the Philippines," Philippine Sociological Review, XIII (October 1965), p. 48.

²⁶ Quiambao, *op. cit.*, p. 98.

²⁷ Carroll, Philippine Institutions, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

²⁸ Edgardo L. Paras, Civil Code of the Philippines Annotated (Manila: Rex Book Store, 1975), p. 683.

the legitimate children which may come after adoption. . . .²⁹

The law does not guarantee status to the child within the family kinship group. He is still considered as an outsider in spite of legal adoption. In fact, he will be the object of envy in inheritance of property if he is given inheritance. Instead of inheriting a larger portion, the relatives will get a smaller part of the inheritance because of his presence. Adoption then, only gives the adopted child the right to be fed, clothed and cared for by the adoptive parents. He would not automatically function as a bona fide member of the family. Legal adoption only saves a child from hunger and exposure.

Although adoption destroys the parental authority of the natural parents, the filial relation of the child to his natural parents is not severed. The adoptive parents have no power to stop the natural parents from seeing the child. This potentially has weakened the relationship established by adoption between the adopter and the adopted. A court ruled, "The parents is not terminated by adoption."³⁰

The adoptive relationship in Philippine society is somewhat artificial. Both the adopted and the adopter might question the stability of their relationship to one another. A child obviously would be better off in his status as a family member among relatives than with adoptive parents, for strong emotional ties in the Filipino family obligate members of the group to help each other in providing their needs.³¹

²⁹ M. Genovea, "Parental Consent to Adoption," Expressweek (July 25, 1974), p. 27

³⁰ M. Genovea, "Child Adoption," Expressweek (July 18, 1974), p. 35.

³¹ Quisumbing, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

Emotional closeness in the Filipino family is usually felt during those times when one member is sick or in some trouble that either endangers his life or the prestige of the family.³²

Social pressure forces the family to take care of one of its members. It is unthinkable for Filipinos to let one of its members be adopted by an unrelated person. But if this happens, the prestige of the family from which the adopted child came will be affected. A Filipino is conditioned to look at his family as the basis of his security and identity.³³ Adoption in the Philippines falls short in providing the emotional security needed for the adopted. He may feel pitied but probably will not feel loved. A Filipino is in a much better position, consequently, as a distant relative than as an adopted child.

PHILIPPINE RELIGIOUS INTERPRETATION OF ADOPTION

The proclamation of the Gospel demands a response. Green contends, "Evangelism is never proclaimed in a vacuum but always to people, and the message must be given in terms that make sense to them."³⁴ Communication between the speaker and the

³² Emma Parras, "The Filipino Family: Cultural Patterns and Values as Seen in Some Work Practice," A Symposium on the Philippine Scene Appraised: Its Challenge to Social Work (Manila, Philippines: Philippine Association of Social Workers, 1965), p. 31.

³³ Suegang, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

³⁴ Michael Green, Evangelism in the Early Church (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1970), p. 63.

listener has to take place before a response can be given. Intelligent communication, according to Evans, is "dependent on the hearer's understanding, in all relevant respects, of the verbal signs in a similar way to that intended by the speaker."³⁵ Grievous errors and pathetic failures in Christianity are results of a wrong understanding of its verbal symbols.³⁶ Communication fails because it begins with the different presuppositions of the communicator and receptor.³⁷ Indigenization of the message is imperative in communication between persons of different cultural backgrounds.³⁸ A high degree of restructuring of the message is expected to take place in this process.

Paul was an effective communicator of the Gospel. In the use of the figure of adoption he was able effectively to communicate to his hearers the message. With it Paul described God's action of taking into his spiritual family both Jews and Gentiles.³⁹ He proclaimed that when a man becomes a Christian he enter into the very family of God.⁴⁰

³⁵ Robert Allen Evans, Intelligible and Responsible Talk About God: A Theory of the Dimensional Structure of Language and its Bearing Upon Theological Symbolism (Lieden: E. J. Brill, 1973), p. 60.

³⁶ Eugene A. Nida, Message and Mission: The Communication of the Christian Faith (Pasadena, California: William Carey Library, 1972), p. 69.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 91.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 87.

³⁹ Archibald T. Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament, IV (Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman Press, 1931), p. 302.

⁴⁰ William Barclay, The Letter to the Romans. (Edinburgh: The St. Andrews Press, 1962), p. 112.

The Pauline concept of "adoption" is one of the chief constituent doctrines of New Testament Theology.⁴¹ Some scholars believe that the doctrine of adoption is to be prized more highly than the doctrines of regeneration, justification,⁴² redemption, reconciliation, salvation and sanctification.⁴³ In Paul's time the term adoption

. . . was a marvelous word for bringing home to the Gentile the fact that they were once out of relationship with God, with no claim on him, but now, through the divine initiative expressed in Christ the proper son, they have become members of the family, heirs to its riches, and privileged to call God by the intimate name 'Abba'.⁴⁴

In spite of the greatness of adoption as a religious concept in the mind of Paul and his hearers, the doctrine was not recognized as significantly important among later theologians. Theron grieves over the fact that "adoption has failed to gain much prominence in the great treatments of systematic and biblical theology."⁴⁵ Why does this motif not appeal greatly to Christians today? Cadbury cites as a reason the "current preconcep-

⁴¹ Thornton Whaling, "Adoption," The Princeton Theological Review, XXI (1923), p. 223.

⁴² Ibid., pp. 328-333.

⁴³ Daniel J. Theron, "'Adoption,' in the Pauline Corpus," Evangelical Quarterly, XXVIII (1956), pp. 10-12.

⁴⁴ Green, op. cit., p. 117.

⁴⁵ Theron, op. cit., p. 8.

tions⁴⁶ of today's Christians. No wonder many Christians cannot follow the mind of Paul in matter. Nida emphasises that

... where there is no indigenization of the message, syncretism is usually the greatest, for without indigenization, there is no meaningful confrontation of religious systems and no intelligent 'Yes' or 'No' to the claims of Jesus Christ.⁴⁷

Adoption, if it would be meaningful to Filipinos must be explained in the light of the Philippine concept of adoption.

Adoption is a concept which, while known to Filipinos since Pre-Spanish times, has not been extensively practiced. Philippine adoption has manifested itself in different forms. Legal adoption can be acquired through the process prescribed by law with the active participation of government agencies. Humanitarian adoption, on the other hand, takes place when a child is cared for by others due to the death of the mother in childbirth. This sometimes occurs also when a family is very large; one or more of the children might be given up for adoption. The saw duro practice in Southern Philippines could fall under this form. No legal step is taken in this type of adoption. Another aspect of this form of adoption is kin adoption, wherein an adult, usually childless, cares for a child of a relative due to the death of the mother of the child or due to need in a large family. Likewise, no legal step is taken in this type of adoption. A faithful servant or worker in

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Henry Cadbury, "Concurrent Phrases in Paul's Religion," Contemporary Thinking About Paul: An Anthology, ed. Thomas Kepler (Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, n.d.), p. 255.

47 Nida, *op. cit.*, p. 185.

his old age also may be "adopted" by the master in gratitude for his length of service with the family. "Spiritual adoption" is so far the most widely practiced form of adoption in the Philippines. The padrino system in Philippine culture offers the opportunity to a child to be a member of his or her Ninong's or Ninang's family without forsaking his own natural family.

A comparison of Paul's concept of adoption and Philippine types of adoption reveals dissimilarities. Paul's idea of adoption involves the acquisition of status and privilege, whereas in the Philippines it is not an honor to be an adopted child. The term ampon (adopted child) connotes a very low status. Therefore, adoption *per se* does not appeal to Filipinos as a motif for the presentation of the Gospel. The Bible teacher must take care in explaining the difference between the Philippine and Pauline type of adoption lest the Filipino be influenced unconsciously against the Gospel. The high and esteemed status of the adoption provided to citizens of the first century Roman empire must be explained in the doctrine's articulation.

Among the forms of adoption in Philippine culture the "spiritual adoption" comes close to the Pauline concept of adoption. It allows the acceptance of a "non-kin" into the family. But Filipinos are careful to call the godchild inaanak (taken as a child) or kinakapatid (taken as a sibling) to identify the source of relationship. The element that binds the relationship is not blood but friendship between the families. The word "adoption" does not depict the relation Paul envisioned in his epistle. So far, no terminology has been coined to illustrate the artificial relationship made through the religious ceremonies. Philippine theologians are here presented with a potentially powerful idea that lacks an indigenous identifying name. The present researcher is not in the position, as yet, to dare coin the terminology because of a lack of

knowledge of linguistics. This leads to another field of inquiry and is not in the realm of this investigation.

CONCLUSION

Paul used everyday pictures to explain the Christian experience. Terms like reconciliation, regeneration, justification, sanctification, glorification and adoption were illustrations used to explain the Christian status found in God through one's faith in Christ. Probably Paul was not expecting that these word-pictures would someday be developed into a highly systematized doctrine or dogma. His main concern was that the Gospel of Jesus Christ be understood in terms of his readers' capacity of understanding.

"Adoption" (Huiotthesia) was a term and concept familiar to the first century man in the Roman empire. Paul borrowed the germ of his idea from his Jewish background. The Greek language gave him the unique terminology. The Roman practice gave him the process that paralleled the faith in Christ. Adoption was the granting of a status through an elaborate ceremony. Each step of the ritual was meaningful both to the participants and the spectators. Possibly no word could be used to show how a sinner became a son of God with all the status and privileges conferred upon him.

In the Philippines, a form of adoption is understood and practiced, but Paul's understanding of adoption was quite different. The illustration of Paul's doctrine of adoption would not be acceptable to Filipinos in the light of Filipino culture, in which adoption has a very different meaning, not being a high concept like that of Roman adoption. Unless one carefully explains the Roman Type of adoption, it is unlikely that the Filipino would be

able to understand Paul's message. Consequently, therefore must be started to decolonize Paul's idea of adoption for Filipinos.

The institution of the family influences heavily the Filipino attitude towards adoption. The "close-knit" nature of the family has defined the behaviour of each member with and without the kin group. In spite of the help Philippine laws have provided with regard to adoption, its positive influences at the present time are limited. Social influences and pressures outweigh legal obligations. Only a change within the institution of the family in the Philippines can change the Filipino attitude towards adoption, and sociologists foresee no drastic changes in the Filipino family institution in the near future.

"Adoption," unless fully explained, is not an appropriate term to use in the religious circles of the Philippines. But Filipinos permit the acceptance of an alien within the kinship group through the religious ceremonies of baptism, marriage and confirmation. These rituals are not in any way related to or considered as adoption. Artificial relationship is generally accepted as a basis for friendship and filial relationship. This practice opens the possibility of introducing a more indigenous presentation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Although "Eukaithesia" is a term found in the Bible, and so is an inspired term, it does not necessarily follow that Filipinos will appreciate it properly. Inspiration has played an active role in the encoding of the Christian message. But a "culture-gap" exists between the Filipinos of today and the Paul of yesterday. The understanding of Filipinos depends upon their ability to decode the message in a manner compatible with Paul's idea. The present Filipino needs more illumination than inspiration in order to understand the Gospel and to make right responses to God through Christ. If no dynamic

Equivalent of "Huiogenesis" can be found, a thorough explanation of the origin and practice of adoption as Paul knew it must be made. Most Christian beliefs are communicated this way.

This study re-iterates the danger of merely memorizing doctrinal terms and statements without taking into consideration the culture of both the communicator and the receptor.

NOTE: This date has been taken from his Master of Theology thesis "Toward An Adequate Philippine Interpretation of the Pauline Doctrine of Adoption." It was presented to the Asia Baptist Graduate Theological Seminary in Baguio City on June 1978.

PREACHING THE DISCIPLES' PRAYER

By: Altus Newell

Prayer is the one subject the disciples asked Jesus to teach them (Luke 11:1). Jesus' response was a model for prayer which after twenty centuries has not been surpassed. This disciples' prayer is a key to Jesus' whole ministry. It brings together the important concerns and themes Jesus had for his followers. Every line has a meaning. It is worthy of the deepest study and best preaching.

Several factors should guide the preaching of this prayer:

- (1) Jesus believed that his disciples needed a model for prayer. - We who like extempora-neous prayer often think of prayer as good in itself and to consider that the answer to spiritual need is more prayer. In Matthew 6:5-6, Jesus showed his disciples that it isn't enough just to pray. All people pray in some way, he declared, the pagan as well as the Jew. What makes the difference, according to Jesus, is how his disciples pray. "Pray then like this," he said (Matt. 6:9, Phillips).
- (2) Jesus' model is a pattern, not a creed. - Simply to memorize this brief prayer and to say it mechanically is to misuse it greatly. Repetition is not unlike the "empty phrases" against which Jesus warned (Matt. 6:7).
- (3) Jesus' pattern shows the simplicity of profound prayer. - Jesus gives a model even a small child can put together. He shows that prayer doesn't depend on many words, eloquent phrases, or a special religious vocabulary. To be sure, Jesus chose his words carefully. But prayer depends on few words and much faith. One three-year-old prayed the following prayer with hands folded and eyes

half-opened: "Dear God, I love you. Thank you. Love, Amy." Surely, God appreciates that holy telegram as much or more than any other prayer.

(4) Jesus' model discloses the directness of prayer. - His pattern begins by addressing God, followed by five or seven direct requests, depending on which form of the prayer you follow - the one in Matthew (6:9-13) or in Luke (11:2-4). Sometime later in the first century, believers added a closing doxology. Jesus' model is specific. He didn't lecture God. Instead, Jesus got down to basics in praying. He prayed about concerns of prime importance.

(5) Jesus' model reveals the life-changing nature of prayer. - Often the motto is heard, "Prayer changes things." Certainly, there is truth in that. But what is more important in Jesus' pattern is that prayer changes persons. One doesn't pray as Jesus prayed and remain the same.

"Our Father Who Art in Heaven"

The great Methodist preacher Clovis Chappell, has told how, as a young man, he went broke in a strange city. For a day he walked the streets of that city hungry. He passed hundreds of people, but he asked none of them for help rather than all the people were strangers. He did not know what they were like. He feared they would not care. Many people today can not pray for the same reason.

How significant it is that Jesus be so revealing us how to pray by telling us to focus on God. Left to ourselves, we tend to focus first on ourselves and our needs. Real prayer, according to Jesus, comes from a thoughtful gaze at God. We must know what God is like to address him as he is.

We are to address God as "Father." Subjects have been written about the Aramaic term Jesus used, Abba.

In the language Jesus spoke, this was the tender term of a child's endearment, "Dear Father," or even, "Dear Daddy." Never before had God been addressed like this. Yet, not only did Jesus do it often in his praying, but he also taught his disciples to address God in the same intimate, trusting manner.

Make no mistake, the intimacy in no way lessens the respect. The term is not "Dad" or "My Old Man." But neither is it a formal or impersonal address. The greatest authority on prayer said that we may address God as "Dear Father."

We are to say, "Our Father." - Here Jesus confronted another possible misuse of prayer. Some persons say, "I'm not much for organized religion, but I do have my own relationship with God." Prayer which follows Jesus' model acknowledges a community of faith. Even if we pray in private, we pray with and for other Christians. True prayer leads us toward others.

We are to pray, "Our Father who are in heaven." A popular view interprets this address as a balance of intimacy ("our Father") and distance ("in heaven").

Jesus, however, continually emphasized, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." He proclaimed that the God, whom many believed resided only in certain holy places or in a far-off heaven, was coming through his ministry to redeem all humanity.

"Hallowed Be Thy Name"

The disciples' prayer is brief and direct, but its interpretation is not always easy. So it is with the first petition. Hallowed is hardly part of our daily vocabulary, and name has a quite different meaning today than in the time of Jesus. To hallow means "to make holy, to reverence." The name expressed a person's nature, character, and personality.

Almost every culture has had some concept of "the holy." The distinctive factor about the God of the Bible is that he revealed the nature of true holiness by revealing his character within the history of the people of Israel. He disclosed that he is a faithful God, a loving God, a righteous God, a missionary God.

all heaven bursting forth with song to God's holiness (Isa. 6:1-3). In the same way Jesus declared that real encounter with God in prayer starts in the awareness of God's nature.

This petition asserts a confession. - Holiness today is unattractive to many because it has been misunderstood. God's challenge is to be holy as he is holy (Lev. 19:2). This challenge does not mean being "holier than thou" but rather being "more like the Master." The force of this petition is: "Lord, let your name be hallowed, beginning in me. Write your name in every part of me."

This petition affirms an expectation. - The Jewish people in Jesus' time concluded every synagogue service with a similar petition called in Aramaic the Qaddish ("holy"). Jesus gave priority and urgency to this plea. It is the prayer of preparation for the new age which dawned in him and which God will fully bring. John's vision focused on the holiness of the God "who was, and is, and is to come!" (Rev. 4:8, NEB). His prayer was, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22:20). Such emphatic expectation calls us to question, "Are we ready for God's final 'hallowing'?"

"Thy Kingdom Come"

Jesus' constant theme was the kingdom of God. Is it any wonder that when Jesus taught his disciples to pray, he told them to say, "Thy kingdom come"?

But what did Jesus mean? Is this kingdom spiritual or also temporal? Is it brought by God or built by man? Is it present or future or just dawning but not completed? What do we mean when we pray, "Thy kingdom come"?

We are accepting God as King. - God's kingdom is often conceived as a territory in which persons have citizenship. This kingdom is not so much something we possess as it is someone who possesses us. The kingdom is come when God is received as King in our lives.

We are seeing Jesus' thinking about kingly rule. God is king when persons respond to Jesus and when persons respond as Jesus. We respond to Jesus when we turn from sin and turn in faith to him. We respond

as Jesus when we submit our lives in obedience to God's kingly rule. His Beatitudes paint the portrait of the "kingdom person" (Matt. 5:3-10).

We are admitting that God's rule as King is both now and later. - God's kingly rule can be traced in all creation and seen rest in Jesus' life, death, and resurrection; but by no means is everything yet in submission to him.

We are to live our lives out of the power of God's final future. - The crucial question is, Do we want him to be King here and now? Do we want to pray: "Come be King in my life! Come be King of my time, talents, and possessions! Come be King in our church?"? Our decision about him now will determine our destiny with him then. When Frank C. Laubach interpreted this petition, he said that to pray, "Thy kingdom come," is to pray, "God, I enlist."

"Thy Will Be Done"

No subject causes more confusion or call for more clarification than the will of God. How can the will of God be reconciled with cruel suffering, tragic losses, heartbreakin disasters?

We should consider first God's plan. - Jesus believed God's intention for all his creation is in every way good and not in any way evil (Matt. 18:14). His intention is that his creation come to fulfillment. The colorful, concrete Aramaic behind the petition, "Thy will be done," means literally, "Let what is well pleasing to God be done." This phrase indicates a positive responsiveness between child and parent. God's intention is that his children do what is pleasing to him.

We must reckon also with God's allowing of permissive will. - The Bible witnesses to God's permission of circumstantial freedom within his creation. God did this so that he could enjoy relationship with creation and particularly with his highest creation. Thus, God permits the choices of human beings to have a real effect. If a person reaches out to hit another person, God allows that decision to have a real effect. Likewise, God allows the natural processes and principles of the universe to have a real effect. A rock tossed off a cliff will plunge downward,

but so will an airliner filled with people if that airliner loses a power of rebellion against God is present in the universe, in human community, and inside human beings. The power of God is stronger than this power of evil, but sin and Satan have not yet been totally subdued. Evil is still part of the circumstances of all creation.

We must look finally at God's redemptive will. - In this unstable and often cruel world, God has a message for us. The message meets us in our tragedies where we feel the difficulty, pain, and loss at the heart of human life and where we are tempted to move to self-pity, hostility, or despair. The message is that God does not overlook tragedy. Rather, God meets tragedy and works to transform it to redeem the world and our lives.

And right here is the secret to praying, "Thy will be done." It's the secret Jesus exemplifies in Gethsemane. He was well aware that suffering lay ahead of him. He could have chosen not to suffer, but he chose instead to trust God in the suffering and to hope beyond the suffering. And what happened to Jesus reveals God's redemptive purpose for our lives. He is the God who is able to take what happens, even the worst that happens, and to bring good from it. We can trust him as Jesus did.

"Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread"

Allowing what worries you? What do you do about worry? In this petition, Jesus taught his disciples how to deal with worry about human need. Bread in the whole range of Jesus' teaching meant both bread of earth and bread of heaven. Jesus was concerned about the whole person.

"Give us." - We begin to deal creatively with worry when we acknowledge our primary dependence on God.

"Give us this day." - We are to deal creatively with worry by living one day at a time. How is it possible? Jesus said it begins in prayer. Living trust must be renewed daily. God provided manna and quail in the wilderness day by day (Ex. 16:19-20). We are to pray for today's need, be thankful for what we

have, use it well, and trust God again for tomorrow.

Lord, for tomorrow and its needs

I do not pray;

But keep me, guide, love me,

Lord, just for today.

"Give us this day our daily bread." - Jesus teaches us to pray for bread not cake. We are to ask God for necessities, not luxuries. This is a plea for a simplified and moderate life style. We have the feeling that the more we have the less we will worry. Jesus showed that our concern with things means more worry. This petition voices the same concern as an earlier biblical prayer (Prov. 30:8-9).

The personal pronouns here are important. This petition seeks the welfare of all not the profit of a few. We enter into family relationship with every person who has need. It takes a responsible Christian to pray this petition and to act.

This petition links all human need with the resources of God. It expresses our dependence, trust, moderation, and compassion. All of these are bound up in the one who said, "I am the bread of life" (John 6:35).

"Forgive Us...as We Forgive"

This petition often causes an awkward pause whenever the disciples' prayer is shared in worship. Forgiveness may be asked for "debts," "trespasses," or "sins". This difference can be traced to varying versions of the prayer.

By any translation, human failure is meant. - The confession is made, "We are sinners." Through this petition state our failure and our responsibility.

Our only hope is God's forgiveness. - We can never remove ourselves from our sinful condition. Just as a physical wound heals by medical attention but the creation of new tissue comes from beyond, even so forgiveness is a new condition which can be brought only by God.

God's forgiveness is free but costly. - True forgiveness is never easy. It cost God his Son. George Buttrick told of an emergency blood transfusion under primitive conditions. A father's vein was

stitched into the vein of his sick child. Thus, the father's lifeblood flowed into the child's body. The father was asked if the procedure hurt. "It hurts," he replied, "but that does not matter."

This gift of forgiveness is freely available, just as it is costly. It can never be purchased or achieved. It can only be received (Eph. 2:8).

God's forgiveness produces forgiveness. - Many people have been troubled by the phrase "as we forgive others." Does it mean God's forgiveness is limited to or caused by our forgiveness? When a person recognizes the depth and completeness of God's forgiveness.

Legend has it that Leonardo da Vinci had a bitter quarrel with one of his neighbors while he was painting The Last Supper. He decided to scorn this person forever by painting his face as the face of Judas Iscariot. When the artist got to the central figure of our Lord, he worked for days to get the right strength and beauty into Jesus' face; but his work was in vain. Finally, he began rereading the Gospels, trying to get better acquainted with Jesus. A sense of shame came over him. He brushed out the face of Judas and forgave his neighbor. When he went back to the face of Jesus, his brushes captured the divine pity and love.

"Lead Us Not Into Temptation"

No one is above temptation or beyond temptation. Yet, often this petition is prayed as if it means, "Don't let us be tempted." Such an interpretation not only is foolish, but it can also lead to deceit (1 Cor. 10:12). Temptation cannot be avoided, but according to the Bible temptation can be resisted. No amount of temptation justifies any degree of sin.

The Greek word for temptation has two meanings. It can mean "to seduce into evil" or "to try or test." God permits our testing, not to make us more able to stand. The time of testing is a time for decision. We can choose right and be strengthened, or we can choose wrong and be weakened. In decision making an enticement to do wrong is always present. It arises from sinful desire in human nature (Jas. 1:13-15).

Only God's power can conquer temptation. - Contrary to popular opinion, we cannot manage temptation by ourselves.

But our cooperation with God is essential. - Only a foolish person says, "Let God do it all." We are responsible not to stay close to sin but to pray for strength to resist (Jas. 4:7).

God always provides a way of deliverance. - In every temptation God promises to "provide the way of escape" (I Cor. 10:13, NASB). We must want this way and seek it!

God wants to lead us. - Not only does God want to lead us through temptation, but he also wants to lead us to "paths of righteousness for his name's sake" (Ps. 23:3). We are to put off evil, but we are also to put on Christ. We are to become filled with the fruit of God's Spirit (Col. 3; Gal. 5).

No person ever fully escapes the desire to sin. When we do sin, there is still help and hope (1 John 1:8-9); but God's power is available also to lead us through temptation. "Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial" (Jas. 1:12, NASB).

"Deliver Us From Evil"

According to some scholars, this petition was not part of Jesus' original prayer. Some feel that it was added as a seventh petition for the sake of perfection and that it is a positive parallel for the preceding negative petition.

Far from being an echo or an addition, however, this petition is unique and vital. In a much better sense, the Model Prayer would be incomplete without it.

Deliver us literally means "snatch us or seize us." From evil usually is interpreted to mean "from doing that which is evil." However, whenever evil is found as a singular noun in Matthew, as it is here, the reference is not to an inanimate object but to a personal being (Matt. 5:37, 39; 13:19,39). It means "the evil one."

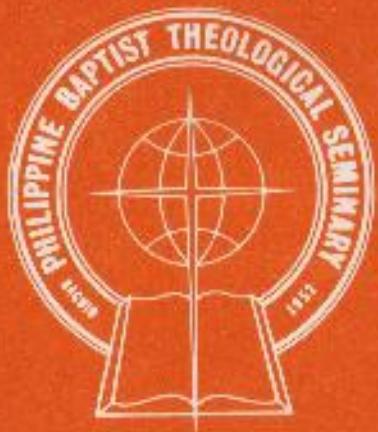
Christians in every century have recognized this personal power of evil. No one wall in Wartburg Castle, a large, dark stain can be seen. It marks the place where Martin Luther found the devil so real that

be buried an farewell to defense and frustration.

How does such deliverance come? Our Lord Jesus Christ was born, lived, died, and was raised from the dead that we might be delivered from this evil one. Christ already has triumphed over Satan. He will fight for us if we will let him. In the epistle of James a double strategy is described for a deliverance from the evil one (Jas. 4:7-8).

We must desire to be delivered. - Kierkegaard told the story of two gamblers, both of whom felt they should quit gambling. One said, "Tonight I'll have my last fling, and tomorrow I'll quit." Kierkegaard said, "He will never quit." The other gambler said: "I cannot speak for tomorrow. But as for today, I am not gambling." Kierkegaard said, "He will quit."

We must draw near to God. - Seeking God's help through studying his Word is the place to start. The Bible is light for our path and strength for our weakness. The next step is prayer. Someone said, "The devil trembles when the weakest Christian gets on his knees." We can resist Satan momentarily, but we cannot win the war. We must be delivered.



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