

Rom. 14:19
So then let
us follow
after things
which make
for peace,
and things
whereby
we may
edify one
another.

John 8:32 And
ye shall know
the truth and
the truth shall
make you free.

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‘ONE THING OR ANOTHER’

by Jim Stauffer

Man, created by God, lives on earth endowed with an eternal soul designed to be with God forever. It should be for all, and is for many, the goal of life here to prepare for life there. There are, of course, obstacles to be overcome. Otherwise it would simply be a matter of “putting in our time here” and then we would all go to be with Him in eternity.

Jesus indicates that is not how it works when he says, *“Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it.”*

The greatest obstacle of each generation is specific to the prevalent influences of its time. In New Testament times, the disciples of Jesus reasoned those of wealth and power would have priority in His kingdom, the church. He dispelled that with the story of the rich young ruler (see **Mat. 19:16-26; Luke 18:18-26**). Jesus concludes the story by saying, *“Truly I say to you, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.”* (**Mat. 19:23,24**) As this is related to them they marvel that one so wealthy could not enter the kingdom *because of his riches* thinking this would remove the common man from any opportunity at all. But Jesus said to them, *“With people this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”* (**Mat. 19:26**).

While there has always been a gap between the wealthy and the remainder of the population, there are levels of that difference that have changed radically from the time of our Lord and today. Even those of us who are not considered wealthy today, live in opulent circumstances by comparison with those of New Testament times. The fact is that every generation of man has faced some form of temptation to selfishly serve the desires of his flesh as he lives on earth while losing his focus on things that pertain to eternal life.

The Psalmist says, **Psa. 49:6** *Even those who trust in their wealth And boast in the abundance of their riches? 7 No man can by any means redeem his brother Or give to God a ransom for him —*. This reminds us of our dependence upon God to provide redemption. All the concern about and attention to material success cannot provide one iota of change in the unjustified soul of every man who has, *sinned and fallen short of the glory of God* (**Rom. 3:23**).

The New Testament Christians often were in fear of their lives as they served God. By the end of the first century many were challenged to deny Christ or face the penalty of death (**Rev. 2:10**).

We live in a day and time when many believe we have the **right** to a comfortable life provided by the government. They demand affordable health care and some are even advocating the government should pay a salary to each person in the country. And while that sounds politically insane, the real danger is they are so concerned about how they live here they have lost sight of where they will spend eternity.

If, indeed, this nation could and did provide a comfortable life for each of its citizens either by public dole or simply by its overall financial success for each of its citizens, it cannot *by any means redeem his brother or give to God a ransom for him*.

We sing a song called faith of our fathers. In that song there is the plea, *if they like them could die for thee*. The substance of that plea is not to return to the days where men are executed for their faith in Christ, but rather for the disciples of the Lord today to have the same commitment to serving Him that we would give our all, yes, even our lives to be faithful to Him.

Every generation has and will continue to be challenged to sacrifice the pleasures of this life in order to achieve the glories of the one that is promised in eternity.

When Jesus raises the question of what a person

would give in exchange for his soul, He reminds us of the need to give up our lives here to obtain the one there. **Matt. 16:24** *Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. 25 "For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. 26 "For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?"*

The old expression, *If it's not one thing it's another* truly applies to the lives of men in every generation as they strive to faithfully serve the Master.

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER

"Then He spoke many things to them in parables, saying: "Behold, a sower went out to sow" (Matthew 13:3). The significance of the Parable of the Sower is seen in the fact that the Synoptics record Jesus' teaching (**Matthew 13; Mark 4; Luke 8**). A sower sowing seed was a common picture to Jesus' audience; farmers in nearby fields would have been common. The seed is sown; the seed falls on different types of ground. That is the point of the parables. Something in everyday life, well known to all, is used to illustrate a greater lesson. In this, Jesus used parables far more than any other teachers or preachers we have in the NT. Maybe that is why *"the common people hear him gladly" (Mark 12:37).*

The word of God, the seed of the kingdom, must be sown (**Luke 8:11**). God wants His followers to proclaim the message of salvation. Life is impossible without seed. New life, spiritual life, is impossible without God's word. We are born again *"not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever" (1 Peter 1:23).* When the seed of the kingdom falls into the good heart, the result will always be Christians! Yet, there is opposition to preaching and to God's word.

Rarely does Jesus explain His parables; here He does. The wayside ground is so hard that the seed cannot penetrate it. Arrogance, pride, neglect, and idleness prevent some from listening to Jesus. The message is preached; their lives remain the same. Sin can sear the heart; it becomes hardened and deaf to the overtures of salvation. The rocky ground says that some are impulsive when first listening to Jesus. Accepting and following Jesus is good; but a faith that is too thin will not last; it doesn't take much to drive out the seed from this kind of soil. The thorny ground is busy ground. Life, with all its distractions, gets in the way of hearing and accepting and following through on what Jesus teaches. Even good things can divert one's attention from the kingdom. The good ground hears, accepts, dwells on, and follows through all the way to true obedience. This kind of life produces fruit

for the Master.

If success in opening the hearts of people by preaching the gospel depends solely on the soundness of the message, why did so many refuse to hear Jesus' words? If success in preaching depends on the preacher alone, why did so many refuse to listen to the Master Teacher? Let us not forget that we, the hearers, have a responsibility toward the teacher and his message. What kind of ground best represents you? Is your heart becoming hardened and insensitive to Christ's message? Is your life so filled with "things" that you hardly have time to "even look up?" Or, do you have patience and resolve to grow, mature, and wait on the Lord? Jesus said: *"When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside."* When we get our hearts right, we will start listening to Jesus. *"He that hath an ear let him hear."*

Randy Harshbarger

You Can't **SERIOUSLY** Believe That!

I am constantly amazed at the attitudes of well-meaning people when they are confronted by plain statements of Scripture. I will point people to what the scripture says about a particular subject and they will respond with, "Yes, but..." and then give some excuse why they can do whatever they want to do that is different from what is written in the Book and still fully expect God to welcome them into Heaven. Then they ask if I "SERIOUSLY BELIEVE that they will be lost" for doing something different from what is plainly written! What do they expect me to say?

For example, Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 14:33-35**, *"As in all the churches of the saints, let the women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but let them be in subjection, as also saith the law. And if they would learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home: for it is shameful for a woman to speak in the church."* He then follows up with the assertion that the truly spiritual would acknowledge that He was writing the commandment of the Lord, NOT his own prejudices, **v. 37**. If we put this together with what he wrote in **1 Timothy 2:8-15** where he consistently uses the word for man which signifies males as opposed to females then it becomes apparent that women preachers are out of the question for any assembly of God-fearing Christians. Am I saying they are all evil people, no, but they have been deceived! The case put forth for women preachers is based on what unbelievers have twisted the scripture into saying, not what it actually says. By the way, if you check history you'll find that almost ALL churches began without women preachers!

Cleveland Reddinger

When ‘Nothing’ Became ‘Something’

Karl Diestelkamp

It took place several billions of years ago—or, so we are told. Make that trillions of years or even quadrillions, if you will. After all, when was the beginning of “Nothing”? Never mind such trying details—one nanosecond before “time” existed, “Nothing” rolled out of its non-existent bed and decided to become “Something.”

There is wild speculation about its beginning. Maybe “Nothing” produced non-existent chemicals and caused a gas explosion that solidified into lifeless matter to become “Something.” We are told that eventually, over multiple eons of “time,” this chaos of lifeless matter experienced enough upheaval and collisions to become the now-known universe with its billions of stars, moons, and planets.

Squeeze out a few more billions of “years” and lifeless “Something” experienced “life.” Theories abound—a combination of chemicals floating around in a primeval soup of some sort—or the result of electrically-charged subatomic particles making accidental contact—or you name it! Somehow some of these were thrown together and began billions of years of evolution into all the varied life forms, extinct and living. We are told, “That’s it—it’s a fact—there’s no need for debate—get with the program.”

However, there are some nagging questions that do need answers before we believe “Something.” For instance, how did the lifeless matter that “evolved” into the mosquito “know” to use its proboscis to pierce and suck blood from life forms with blood rather than sucking sap from trees? And then, what process stamped out evolution and allowed consistent reproduction of all living things to take over so that everything reproduces “after its kind”? “Nothing” obviously died. “Something” spawned by “Nothing” provides no answers—just theories (guesswork).

So where does man go for believable answers to the origin of “Something”? The answers are not in some distant planet or galaxy! *“By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible” (Hebrews 11:3). “Let all the earth fear the Lord; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him. For He spoke, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast” (Psalm 33:8,9). “And God said...” (Genesis 1:3,6,9,13,14,20,24,26,28,29).*

Psalm 90:1,2 — *“Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever You had formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.”*

Isaiah 40:28 — *“Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Everlasting God, the Lord, The Creator of the ends of the earth, neither faints nor is weary. There is no searching of His understanding”.*

“The fool has said in his heart, ‘there is no God’...” (Psalm 14:1). Pity the poor atheist and unbeliever whose god is “Nothing,” and whose hope ends at the grave. Show more and we welcome it. *“....submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ” (Ephesians 5:21).*

Think on These Things; Cortland Illinois; Taken from the Market Street Messenger

GRATITUDE

It is gratitude that prompted an old man to visit an old broken pier on the eastern seacoast of Florida. Every Friday night, until his death in 1973, he would return, walking slowly and slightly stooped with a large bucket of shrimp. The sea gulls would flock to this old man, and he would feed them from his bucket. Many years before, in October, 1942, Captain Eddie Rickenbacker was on a mission in a B-17 to deliver an important message to General Douglas MacArthur in New Guinea. But there was an unexpected detour which would hurl Captain Eddie into the most harrowing adventure of his life. Somewhere over the South Pacific the Flying Fortress became lost beyond the reach of radio. Fuel ran dangerously low, so the men ditched their plane in the ocean...For nearly a month Captain Eddie and his companions would fight the water, and the weather, and the scorching sun. They spent many sleepless nights recoiling as giant sharks rammed their rafts. The largest raft was nine by five. The biggest shark...ten feet long. But of all their enemies at sea, one proved most formidable: starvation. Eight days out, their rations were long gone or destroyed by the salt water. It would take a miracle to sustain them. And a miracle occurred. In Captain Eddie's own words, "Cherry," that was the B-17 pilot, Captain William Cherry, "read the service that afternoon, and we finished with a prayer for deliverance and a hymn of praise. There was some talk, but it tapered off in the oppressive heat. With my hat pulled down over my eyes to keep out some of the glare, I dozed off." Now this is still Captain Rickenbacker talking..."Something landed on my head. I knew that it was a sea gull. I don't know how I knew, I just knew. Everyone else knew too. No one said a word, but peering out from under my hat brim without moving my head, I could see the expression on their faces. They were staring at that gull.

The gull meant food...if I could catch it." And the rest, as they say, is history. Captain Eddie caught the gull. Its flesh was eaten. Its intestines were used for bait to catch fish. The survivors were sustained and their hopes renewed because a lone sea gull, uncharacteristically hundreds of miles from land, offered itself as a sacrifice. You know that Captain Eddie made it.

And now you also know...that he never forgot. Because every Friday evening about sunset...on a lonely stretch along the eastern Florida seacoast...you could see an old man walking...white haired, bushy eyebrowed, slightly bent. His bucket filled with shrimp was to feed the gulls...to remember that one which, on a day long past, gave itself without struggle...like manna in the wilderness.

Paul Harvey's The Rest of the Story "The Old Man and the Gulls" 1977, quoted in Knofel Stanton, Heaven Bound Living, Standard, 1989, p. 79-80.

Eph. 2:19 *So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, 20 being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone; 21 in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord;*

1Pet. 2:9 *But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:*

Psa. 1:1 *Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.*

HOURS OF WORSHIP

Sunday A.M. 9:30 Bible Study

Sunday A.M. 10:20 Assembled Worship

Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship

Wednesday P.M. 7:00 Bible Study and Worship

Visitors welcome

We conduct in home Bible Studies

We offer Correspondence Courses

Evangelist and Editor Jim Stauffer

Elders: Ron Peck and Jim Stauffer

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NEWS AND NOTES:

PLEASE REMEMBER JAN PATRICK, STEPHEN KIMKER AND STEVE WIMP IN PRAYER AS THEY DEAL WITH HEALTH ISSUES.

SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE CLASS
- FOLLOWING THE MESSIAH
RON PECK

WEDNESDAY EVENING BIBLE
CLASS - FORGIVENESS
JIM STAUFFER

SUNDAY SERMON: WAIT FOR THE
LORD



What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear the gospel - Romans 10:17

Believe in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

Repent of sins - Acts 17:30

Confess Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

Be Baptized for remission of sins - Acts 2:38

Be Faithful unto death - Revelation 2:10