

Bored to Death!

by Stan Harvey

PARENTS of teenagers frequently hear them complaining because “there is nothing to do.” “I’m bored!” they will say in disgust. Or when told to do something constructive, their reply is often, “that’s soooo boring!” The modern world of America, with all its convenient gadgets and the instant gratification and entertaining aspects of videos and CD’s, has contributed to the development of the “bored” personality.

Unfortunately, boredom commonly follows youth into adulthood, and too many times into the church as well. To hear some talk, they are “bored to death” with the activities, or lack thereof, of the church. Although it is true that in many cases certain congregations are floundering in mediocrity because of poor and visionless leadership, uninspired and shallow preaching and indifferent and apathetic members, it doesn’t have to be that way! Each child of God must look himself squarely in the eye and assume responsibility for his own spiritual growth!

Spiritual boredom suggests that a person is unconcerned not only about his own soul, but also about the souls of a lost world. Consider: Was this the attitude of Christ, the apostles, or the early church? Only one answer here – no! (Matt. 16:24-27; Acts 5:42; 8:4). Boredom produces unconcern!

Spiritual boredom suggests that a person is not interested in the distinctive nature of the church that one reads about in the New Testament. Consider: Did Christ have an interest in

the church? Absolutely! Yes! Without a doubt! (Acts 20:28; Matt. 16:17-18; 28:18-20; 1 Pet. 1:18-19). Blood was the purchase price!

Spiritual boredom suggests that a person is indifferent to doctrinal issues and lukewarm about such things as whether baptism is necessary to one’s salvation. Consider: Is there any way to misunderstand the words of Jesus regarding baptism? No! (Mk. 16:16). Is there any way to misunderstand the teaching of Peter regarding this essential doctrine? No! (Acts 2:28; 1 Pet. 3:21). Boredom, my friends is a symptom of something far deeper!

Spiritual boredom leads a person to careless and nonchalant thinking regarding the acceptance of additions or changes made to the worship assembly such as instrumental music, not observing the Lord’s Supper each first day of the week, the use of drama and entertainment in the assembly, women serving in the capacity of a preacher or an elder, and in the leading of prayer in the assembled body. This kind of reasoning also leads to unscriptural conclusions regarding marriage, divorce and remarriage. To be sure, Jesus and the inspired Paul taught that all of the above, plus many other areas were to follow the divine pattern as set forth in the Word of God (Jn. 4:24; Matt. 15:8-9; 1 Tim. 3:1-14; Titus 1:1-16; Matt. 5:32; 19:1-9; Rom. 7:1-3).

In a word, spiritual boredom as defined above, implies a sense of listlessness! To be listless spiritually, is to ensure that one’s name will not be listed in the book of life. The only way to defeat a “bored” mentality is to take action, shake off the rust, develop a deep love for God and His Word and keep moving forward. Paul pleaded for Christians to learn this teaching. “...I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon” (1 Cor. 3:10). Are you “bored to death” spiritually? I pray not!

Heartland Herald

1899 Saint Joseph St.
Dubuque, Iowa 52003



Heartland church of Christ

3430 Dodge St. Suite 1
Dubuque, Iowa 52003
(563) 588-1974

Evangelist

Michael Demory

Ministers

All members of the church

Schedule of Services

Sunday—9:30am
Wednesday—7:00pm

Evangellistic Efforts

Dubuque Advertiser

TV Program
“The Bible Says”

Public Access
Cable Channel 16

Free Bible Studies

Steps to Salvation

- **Hear the Word**
(Romans 10:17)
- **Believe** (Hebrews 11:6)
- **Repent** (Luke 13:3)
- **Confess Christ**
(Matthew 10:32-33)
- **Baptism** (1 Peter 3:21)
- **Faithful Living**
(Revelation 2:10; 1 Corinthians 15:58)
- **Bearing fruit**
(Colossians 1:10)

Volume 5 No. 1
August 1, 2010

Heartland Herald

Practicing 1st Century Christianity in the 21st Century

Website: www.dbqheartlandcoc.org

Email: the_bible_says@dbqheartlandcoc.org

Why Did Jesus Die for Me?

By J. Cleo Scott

IN the book of Genesis we have a record of Adam and Eve as created by God. In their pristine state, they were pure. All that God created was “good” (Gen. 1:31). But in the third chapter we read that mankind rebelled:

“And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die” (Gen. 3:2-3)

God says in 1 John 3:4; “Sin is the transgression of the law.” To disobey God is sin, and sin is the transgression of the law. The transgression of the law brings death. “The soul that sinneth, it shall die” (Ezek. 18:20). The result of Adam’s sin was physical death to all mankind, and both physical and spiritual death to Adam and Eve. Death means separation. Thus Adam and Eve were separated from God spiritually, and from that day they began to die physically.

The Deadly Results of Sin

God had said to Adam and Eve that if they sinned, they would “surely die.” And, sure enough, they ate and died. What about me? Is this still true? Yes, all sin still brings spiritual death, just as Ezekiel said. “All have sinned and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). “Wherefore, as by one man (Adam) sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned” (Rom. 5:12). Physical death passed upon all men, and spiritual death came to all men because all have sinned. Therefore, the law of “sin and death” is still a part of God’s eternal plan. That being the case, all men would be lost if God did not love us so much. We all know that “the wages of sin is [spiritual] death, but the free gift of God is eternal life” (Rom. 6:23).

God’s love caused Christ to die in my stead. Sin brings death – mine or someone else’s in my place. Notice these scriptures:

“But God commended His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son; much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life” (Rom. 5:8-10)

“For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death” (Rom. 8:2)

Remember in Prayer

Evangelizing the World

Garret Derouin—Webster, Wisc.
 Scott Nedland—Rice Lake, Wisc.
 Brian Sherrell—Rockfalls, IL.
 Bernie Guzman—Philippines
 Johnny Robertson— Martinsville, Vir
 James Oldfield—Riedsville, NC
 Derrick Brown —Jamaica
 Gary Workman—Ukraine
 Kolakaluri Prasad—Nalgonda, Dist., India
 G. Prabhu Kumar—Chennai, India
 John O’Neal—India & Ghana

Tom Wacaster—India & Russia
 Holger Neubauer—South Haven, Michigan
 Ernie Lawrence—Hutto, Texas

Military

Jonathan Duckstein—Afghanistan
 Daniel Heflin—Afghanistan
 Jon McCain—Tech Training
 Soldiers defending our borders
 Military families who are coping while loved ones
 in harms way

Special Prayers

Hanna Prasad—ill
 Linda Krabacher—side effects of medication

Preston Estes family
 Wade Miller—diabetes
 Bubba—has improved some from e-coli infection
 Toni Waddings step-mother—leukemia
 Susan Noel— that she studies to understand God
 Russell Bender— that he studies to understand God
 Sherrell family
 Charles Pogue
 Harris family
 Lyra Grochmal (8 yrs)—spine cancer— tumors are
 stable
 Mya Kulle - a tumor that turned out to be a cyst
 Our new evangelism effort
 Lilly Rucker & family
 Laurie Davis—Multiple Sclerosis
 Yolanda Ritchwood—M.S.
 Natalie Bauman—M.S.

Freeman Dudley—liver cancer
 Kaiser family
 Eric Fisher—blood disease
 Rockfalls church of Christ
 TV Program
 State of our Nation
 The closing of Planned Parenthood
 The church
 The erring & the Lost

Calendar of Events

- **August/2nd week**—Power Lectures—Southaven, MS
- **Sept/3rd week**—St. Louis Lectures
- **October 18-21**—Lectureship—Dubuque, IA

“And, having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you’re holy and unblamable and unreprouvable in His sight” (Col. 1:20-22)

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Jn. 3:16)

Why Did Jesus Have to Die?

God, from the beginning, set up a way of worship that included a blood sacrifice to show that man desired to come before God to worship and to offer sacrifice because of his own sins. In Genesis 4 God rejected an offering by Cain because it was not what God had said. Hebrews 11:4 tells us that Abel offered a better sacrifice and was acceptable, because he offered by faith and Cain did not. Abel offered a blood offering, which was acceptable. Cain offered of the fruit of the ground and was rejected because God had not said to offer such. Specifying what to offer eliminates everything else. Cain and Abel knew what God had said, because “faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17). Thus Cain and Abel heard. Abel obeyed; Cain disobeyed. Because of disobedience, God rejected his sacrifice.

As we continue to follow God’s law of sacrifice and worship, He directed a blood offering for the Patriarchs and the Jews. Why? We may not know all of the “why,” but God commanded it. We know that life is in the blood:

“But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat” (Gen. 9:4)

“For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it unto you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul” (Lev. 17:11)

“And almost all things are by the law purged [cleansed] with blood; and without the shedding of blood is no remission (Heb. 9:22)

The blood sacrifices that were offered under the Law of Moses and by the patriarchs could not purge sins. *“But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sin every year, for it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins” (Heb. 10:3-4)*. If man is to be forgiven [purged] of sins, there must be something more than a sacrifice of bulls and goats. They could not take our sins away. God would again remember them next year. Something else had to be done.

Man could not sacrifice himself for sins – whether his own or someone else’s. He himself was guilty. *“For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23)*. One who would die for the sins of another must have no sins of his own. There was only one who could qualify – the perfect Son of God. Jesus was “the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth,” having *“loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood” (Rev. 1:5)*.

The “Treadmill of Trying Hard” is Good Exercise

by Rusty Stark

IN recent years, through a combination of pop-psychology and Calvinistic thought, the Lord’s church has been told by wool-covered wolves that works are not the answer, they are the problem. A man recently told me about the many people he knew who had been “beat up,” discouraged, disheartened, and generally damaged by thinking

that they had to perform in order to be accepted by God. Many are attempting to “set us free” from the idea that our works determine our destiny, and they say that the very idea that salvation is conditional on our works is a no-win situation.

It is hard to try hard. Trying hard often involves self-control, self-sacrifice and self-denial. These three are opposites and enemies of selfishness, and selfishness makes our world go ‘round. Since our world is dedicated to avoiding pain and unpleasantness, they have set forth a myth that working hard and struggling to do right is bad for us. Many have accepted this myth as truth. Like buying swampland or the Brooklyn Bridge, many brethren have bought stock in the idea that “performance-based religion” is the enemy of our souls and detrimental to our joy and peace. Consider two simple Bible truths.

God put us on the “treadmill of trying hard.” Whether we think it is good or bad, frustrating or encouraging, regardless of our thoughts on the matter at all, Hebrews 5:8-9 still says that Jesus will save those who obey. Matthew 7:21 still says that we must obey in order to enter into the kingdom of heaven. 2 Peter 1:5 teaches us to try hard (giving all diligence) to add various virtues to our character. 2 Peter 1:10 says we must try hard (give diligence) to make our calling and election sure, and teaches that whether or not we fall is a matter of our efforts.

Man often sees great wisdom in rejecting plain Bible truth, but such wisdom is foolishness to God (1 Cor. 1:18-31). Whatever else we say, we should first admit that God wants us to work in order to receive and maintain the salvation He has offered us. Salvation is by grace, apart from the works of the old law, and apart from works of merit, but it is by grace (God’s part) through faith (man’s response) that we are saved (Eph. 2:8-9). God has provided salvation, and has set the conditions we must meet in order to accept His gift. The fact that salvation is conditional puts us on the “treadmill of trying hard.”

God teaches that this treadmill is good for us. First and

foremost because it allows us to appropriate the gift of salvation, but also because the “treadmill of trying hard” is good exercise. Solomon understood that God had given work to the sons of men to be exercised by it (Ecc. 3:10). Paul claimed that his rejoicing was found in his service: *“For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward” (2 Cor. 1:12)*.

He admonished that peace was to be found in obedience, doing the things we know to be right. *“Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you” (Phil. 4:9)*. All of life testifies to the truth that challenge, hard work, setbacks, and pain, carry a blessing with them. We need to be exercised by the treadmill of trying hard.

Ours is a world that frowns on giving failing grades to those who fail for fear of damaging their self-esteem, rather than seeing failure now as a learning process leading to future success. Our world frowns on punishment. Our world is more willing to “lower the bar” than to take the chance of frustrating someone by setting the bar too high.

In such a world, we have a choice. We can buy into our world’s viewpoint and twist the Scriptures to support that position or we can accept the truth of God’s word. The first road is a broad, easy road, with many traveling on it because it takes so little effort. Self-control is difficult, and many will reject salvation if it depends on struggle and overcoming. Strength is needed to walk the narrow, restrictive road.

Hard work is not only involved in our salvation, it is essential. Jesus says we must strive to enter in by this gate (Lk. 13:24). The word “strive” means to agonize – there is pain and effort involved. But this difficult way is not only good exercise for us, it is the only way that leads to life.