



THE CHALLENGER

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PROCLAIMING THE WORD TO THE WORLD

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God Knows

BY THE FOUNDER

“But He knows the way that I take; when He has tried me, I shall come forth as gold” Job 23:10

At the beginning of this chapter, Job all but despaired of his lot in life. “Even today is my complaint bitter; my stroke is heavier than my groaning” (Job 23:2). Then in verse ten Job now seeks the calming presence of the Lord in the midst of his calamity — “HE KNOWS”! Job recognizes that God’s (although He be unseen) knowledge of his situation brings him comfort and hope. “Behold, I go forward, but He is not there, and backward, but I cannot perceive Him: On the left hand, where He does work, but I cannot behold Him: He hides Himself on the right hand, that I cannot see Him” (vs. 8, 9). If today God notices the fall of the sparrow and numbers the hairs on our head, we can also rest assured in all occasions and situations, that God knows all about us. (Matthew 20:29, 39) The confidence that Job held fast to was not only that God knew, but that the end result would be gold.

His Attribute of Omniscience

“For his eyes are upon the ways of man, and He sees all his goings” (Job 34:21). “The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good” (Proverbs 15:3). This thrilling truth communicates either distress or comfort. If your life is filled with sin, you may justify and seek to deny it, but God still knows. To the genuine Christian (there is no other kind); this fact means real comfort in our trials, difficulties, temptations, and sorrows. All of these positions are promised to us. Our God has full knowledge of such and goes through them with us, and we shall be the better for them. We know that Job did not fully understand the way he took, but God did. Many times God uses heredity and environmental circumstances as powerful influences upon us. They cannot be ignored. So little do we know the way we take. “O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walks to direct his steps” (Jeremiah 10:23). Job knew the way he took. “My foot has held His steps, His way have I kept, and not declined. Neither have I gone back from the commandments of His lips; I have esteemed the words of His mouth more than my necessary food” (Job 23:11, 12). Our failures are the result of lightly esteeming God’s commandments.

The Way We Take

Friend of mine, which road have you chosen to travel? Are you on the broad or narrow way? “Enter you in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leads to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat. Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, that leads to life, and few there be that find it” (Matthew

7:13,14). The larger crowd that surrounds us is headed toward the gate to hell. Few will reach heaven’s gate. Afraid of being different and separate from this world’s crowd? “So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God” (Romans 14:12).

Put to the Test

Remember, it is God Who tries us. He already knows us and needs no further revelation. The fiery trials we go through are for the purpose of revealing ourselves to our personal consciousness. We learn patience in suffering. It is so sad that many accept Satan as the cause of their troubles. This is not so according to the Scriptures. (Have you read our printed booklet, “GIVE NO PLACE TO THE DEVIL”? Write for your free copy today!) Remember, Satan had to secure God’s permission before touching Job. Have you noticed Job’s reaction when he lost his herds, servants, and his children, as recorded in chapter one? “The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the Name of the Lord” (Job 1:21). What marvelous comfort comes when we realize that no matter what agent the Lord might choose, it is God who is testing us. Jesus Christ said, “The cup which my Father has given me, shall I not drink it?” (John 18:11) When it becomes our turn, let’s accept the “cup” as from our Father’s hand.

It is easy to question God’s dealing with us. *Why me, when so many are well and healthy? Why should others be spared their loved ones and mine taken?* “O man, who are you that replies against God? Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, why have you made me thus? (Romans 9:20) It is a serious sin to

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question the dealings of our Creator. All of His actions with us must be filtered through His love, grace, and mercy. "Wherein you greatly rejoice (His glorious salvation), though now for a season, if need be, you are in heaviness through manifold temptations (trials): That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perishes, though it be tried with fire, might be found to praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (I Peter 1:6). "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you; but rejoice, inasmuch as you are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that, when his glory shall be revealed, you may be glad also with exceeding joy" (I Peter 4:12,13).

The Ultimate End

"I SHALL COME FORTH AS GOLD." Job knew he was not gold (perfect). There is much dross in us, but God is working daily within our lives as His children. Notice Job's full assurance and confidence: "I shall come forth shining as gold." Where does that come from? The divine purpose of Almighty God cannot fail. "The Lord will perfect that which concerns me" (Psalm 138:8). Who has this assurance? Those who are willing to be led through fiery trials. The Lord Himself will be with us in the lion's den, the fiery furnace, and the Garden of Gethsemane. There will be no credit to our account, for the glory will all belong to the Divine Refiner. (James 1:12)

The glory of the New Jerusalem will not just be golden streets, but in the golden stamp of the image of God placed within His children. "He did also predestinate to be conformed to the images of His Son" (Romans 8:29). If you end up in this holy City, be sure to look me up, for I shall be there. It will be the consequence of God's work within both of us. (Ephesians 2:8-10) In the meantime, *I say, Oh, God, continue to burn within me Your refining fire. I long to be holy and conformed to Your will, plan, and purpose in the life and ministry of Dwight Porter.*

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the faith He demands. The repentance God demands is given to those who will dare to be honest about their sins in the presence of a holy God.

A Scriptural Warning

On His earthly pilgrimage the Son of God had twelve disciples. Over and over we read of their lack of faith and understanding. They witnessed His miracles. Today's miracle-crowd need to realize that miracles do not produce faith or are they the source of it. Remember the time when Christ came to them walking on the water and how fearful his disciples became? Remember Peter almost sinking? Hear Christ's appraisal of their condition: "Be of good cheer, it is I, be not afraid. O you of LITTLE FAITH, WHEREFORE DID YOU DOUBT?" (Matthew 14:27,31) the boat was sinking while Christ slept on a pillow. The frantic disciples asked, "Master, care you not that we perish?" Christ rebuked the wind and raging sea. Remember their shock? Even the wind and the waves obeyed His voice. You do not think He has lost that control, do you? (Two years ago He sent two hurricanes over the top of my home within a month's time!) On this particular occasion the disciples lost all faith. "And He said to them, Why are you so fearful? How is it that YOU HAVE NO FAITH?" (Mark 4:38,40) Will we Christians learn at the Judgment Seat what we lost during our lifetime because of a lack of faith? Will we learn the physical ailments brought on by fear, frustration, and bitterness because we failed to believe God in obedience?

The greatest joy in all the world is to please the Lord Who died for us. What delight to live for Him Who gave His life for us, that we may live free from the power of sin, with His resurrection power within us. One of His precious promises is that never will He leave or forsake us. Right after, He tells us, in facing death, not to fear for He will be with us as we pass through the valley (Psalm 23). After the great resurrection of all the saints, we face His judgment of our works from the time we got saved. Right now, this moment, I am going to believe, obey, and serve Him with all my heart. I don't know about you, but I am looking forward to the time when I can lay my crowns at his feet. His grace has afforded me a wonderful ministry of making His provision known to many people. I am delighted that you, dear reader, are one of them.

BE OF GOOD CHEER comes from heaven. God has placed His promises on the pages of His Book, the Bible. When you believe them, you rest upon them, with confidence that your God is capable of performing that which He has committed Himself to do in your behalf. But, remember His promises are for two people: for the righteous, blessing — for sinners, judgment, which includes hell for all eternity. "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me" (Psalm 66:18). David said in Psalm 86:7, "In the day of my trouble I will call upon You; and You will answer me." God does not respond to unrepentant sinners. You must admit and turn from your sin and trust the sacrifice of Christ on the cross to be satisfactory to His holy Father. Christ arose from the dead and will share His resurrection power with you. He will so change your heart and mind that He can classify you as His child in His family (John 1:12). When will you trust Him to do it? Then you too can look forward to a bright future, and you can be God's messenger of good cheer to those around you who know not Christ as Savior and Lord.

Personal Word



PASTOR PORTER CALLED HOME!

His personal work here on earth is done. Pastor Dwight Porter was issued the “*Come up hither,*” by His Lord and Savior on April 3, 2010. He had entered a hospital for a knee replacement on Sept. 3, 2009. Exactly seven grueling, rough months later he passed into glory. He and his wife Marian touched the spiritual lives of thousands through a number of different ministries spanning well over five decades of service. It was Pastor Porter’s wish that The Hour of Grace and Power ministries continue onward, delivering spiritual guidance, sound doctrine, and encouragement through the monthly newsletter, “**The Challenger,**” as well as through the

Gospel Literature ministry to thousands of inmates throughout the United States. His audio ministry also, has been a blessing to countless individuals seeking comfort from the Scriptures and a better understanding of God’s Word. We already deeply miss Pastor Porter, our Brother and good friend in the Lord Jesus Christ, but we also rejoice in his eternal rest with the Lord, where each of us who are saved will see him once again.

Accordingly, we will honor his wishes and continue on with the work he started; getting the Gospel of Christ to a lost and dying world, and encouraging the saint of God to be steadfast, unmovable, and faithful, and not to be weary in well doing. However, we are not naive to think that we can do it alone. The power of the Holy Spirit must be present in every aspect of this ministry as well as in the lives of the people behind it. Our lives must exemplify what is sent out – not just dictate it to others.

You too, are a vital part of this ministry. You know that The Hour of Grace and Power is completely funded by the generous gifts from the people of God. That also will remain the same. There are no big institutions handing out grants or endowments to us. We are totally dependent on the Lord working on and through your hearts to support the ministry as you are able. We want no conflict to your giving first to your local church. We will continue to make all materials available without cost, obligation, or financial solicitation.

LET ME INTRODUCE YOU

To the most important Person of this ministry: The Lord Jesus Christ. It is because of His finished work on the cross, His death, and literal resurrection, that the Gospel is the Gospel of Christ, and the power of God unto salvation. After 40 some years of being saved, it is still hard to comprehend HOW He took to Himself my sin, the whole of it, and paid it in full, as well as suffer what I would have had to suffer, had I not received Him as personal Savior. But the Scriptures affirm that He did and that He offers to all a salvation that is received in no other way than to take God at His Word and, by faith, trust Him alone as Savior. Upon that faith, God saved us by His grace. In this ministry, man is not the focus: the Lord Jesus Christ is. He is all the focus, and He is preeminent. He is the motivation behind all that goes forth. We are here to please and honor Him, and by His strength and grace, we will accomplish that in all we do here.

Next, to the servants who give some of their day, or days, to put this ministry into your hand. Our Bible correspondence course has been handled so faithfully and efficiently for so long by one married couple, that it’s become an expected thing. But we know it comes with great sacrifice. Nothing that counts for Christ is without sacrifice. We are so blessed to have them serve with us. Bulk mailings are handled by another faithful couple and then distributed by another individual to many chaplains and prisons. Our literature distribution is handled by six to eight people coming together on the designated time, with ‘a mind to work.’ Their main distraction seems

to be me, when I show up and slow them down. We have been trying to speed up distribution requests and streamline the process. Normally, our requests go out the same week, or if there is a lull of requests, the next week. Our Challenger had been slowed down by two issues: first, Pastor Porter and his failing health, and second, financial constraints to print and publish. We do not feel that we should put our printer or our collator and mailer of the Challenger in situations where we can’t pay them for their services. Thus, there have been a couple of months where there has not been a Challenger. The cassette and CD recordings are also lacking because of that reason as well. Understand, this isn’t a complaint; it is a disclosure that we feel you ought to know about so you know how better to pray for the ministry. Our website is a constant source of visits, with much the same materials, only much faster to receive and download. The couple handling most of this and the organization continue to amaze all of us. The Lord has blessed them with great strength to do His work, and thus us, and you receive that same blessing.

Lastly, and rightly so, is me and my wife. In an upcoming issue, we will let you know how we came to know the Porter’s, and our influences on each other. I am the pastor of my church and working on our 20th year. Our previous church was in Montana (quite a change, isn’t it?). I fully realize that I am not Pastor Porter, and I don’t believe that the Lord wants me to be him. Yet there are great similarities, which over 33 years of no contact with each other, brought us together in the ministry. If you have read any of the past articles that have been written by me, then you know where I stand on many things in the Word. My agenda is God’s agenda; nothing more, and nothing less. I am left here to serve all of you, whether anyone else does or not. Speaking for all of us who serve here, we want to be a blessing to all; to see sinners come to Christ as Savior; to see saints established in the faith and living holy lives – and we want the Challenger to do just that, **challenge you in the faith and your walk with Christ.** And we want more people to be reading our materials, that without you, we cannot accomplish.

Thanks to all of you for the past prayers, support and encouragement. It has not been in vain. We pray for what the Lord has for us now and in the future, that we will be found walking together in the truth until the Lord comes for us.

Dr. T. Michael Eccleston—Editor

I Exhort You to Be of Good Cheer

BY THE FOUNDER

THE APOSTLE PAUL was in a ship which was breaking apart in the midst of a storm. He had heard from heaven and shared the good news with the storm-hardened sailors: "And now I exhort you to be of great cheer, for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship" (Acts 27:22). What was his source for such good news? "For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve" (v.23). He belonged to God and was His servant; he had heard from his Master. Hear his automatic conclusion to God's promise to spare all their lives: "Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer for I BELIEVE GOD; that it shall be even as it was told me" (Acts 27:25).

We have received a message as direct from God as Paul. A God-breathed Book is ours and the promise of its preservation is in effect today (Matthew 5:18). When Paul believed God's announced promise, immediately he went into action. The possibility of unbelief on the part of the sailors was no deterrent. He simply took for granted that what God had revealed to him would be a reality, then announced it. I believe this demonstration to be one of the best in the Bible concerning faith.

Faith Moves into Action

"BY FAITH Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, OBEYED; and he went out, not knowing where he went" (Hebrews 11:8). How could he do such a thing? Wonder what his wife thought? His action was in response to his faith. He went into the action that faith demands.

"BY FAITH Noah being warned of things not seen as yet (rain) moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith" (Hebrews 11:7). He feared the judgment and wrath of God. He built a monstrosity, as his neighbors would conclude. His righteousness was based upon the faith that God gave him for that occasion. Noah went into action.

"BY FAITH Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents (no small task) . . . refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter . . . choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God . . . esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; he had respect to the recompense of the reward. . . forsook Egypt . . . endured, as seeing Him Who is invisible . . . kept the Passover" (Hebrews 11:23-28). Please notice that next verse. When Moses left Egypt, he took a great nation with him. "BY FAITH, they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land, which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned" (Hebrews 11:29). The miracles God performed through Moses are thrilling to read. How could they be? BY FAITH! These men here listed in the Bible believed and obeyed God. These two qualities are inseparable. Faith goes to work in obedience. "Even so faith, if it has not works is dead, being alone. But will you know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?" (James 2:17,20)

Pleasing God

Is there ever a more noble ambition than this? Any higher goal? "BY FAITH, Enoch was translated . . . for before his translation he had this testimony, THAT HE PLEASED GOD" (Hebrews 11:5). On what basis? BY FAITH. "But without faith it is IMPOSSIBLE TO PLEASE HIM; for he that comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him" (Hebrews 11:6). You should read my free printed message "WHAT IS FAITH?" for a fuller explanation of this wonderful verse of scripture. When Christ desired to reveal Himself to the woman by the well, what instruction did He give her? "WOMAN, BELIEVE ME" (John 4:21). This cannot be a laborious exercise or a meritorious one. He makes available

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Dwight Porter, D.D., Founder

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*Be you steadfast, unmovable, always
abounding in the work of the Lord . . . You
know your labor is not in vain in the Lord"*
I Corinthians 15:58

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