

December 2022

Braman Foundation of Charities
presents

DISCIPLESHIP

A Devotional Magazine

*A Christmas
Message*



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Reflections

We are pleased to offer to you a “Daily Reflection” for every day of the year. It is vital to use a strong, spiritual based, Christ centered reading to help start your devotion or to end your devotion.



Favorite Scripture & Prayers

Braman Foundation of Charities has collected and discovered Promises and Commands from our Lord through scripture for decades. Additionally, we know there are prayers that have been written throughout the bible to give us both guidance and comfort. This collection, when reflected on will give deep direction, comfort, and joy.



Understanding the Holy Spirit

Growing in understanding of the Holy Spirit is so important in one's faith because the Holy Spirit is your constant companion. Thanks to God through Christ the Holy Spirit has been given to us for various reasons. This body of work has been written to support this fact. One's faith must continue to grow in order to better serve the Lord in all our endeavors.



An Understanding of Devotion, Confession, Self Reflection & Repentance

This short essay is to help the believer with tools to bring him or her into a deeper relationship with Christ. Simply, to the point, and to testify in truth and the word of God. Progress into a relationship with Christ that is the single most important relationship in your life. He will never leave you, nor forsake you.

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“Be part of a Christ centered movement to Love Our Neighbor”

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Welcome

Merry Christmas!

We wish for you and your family a very blessed and Merry Christmas. We hope you are blessed with the presence of Christ in your midst as you celebrate the birth of Christ.

As we wind down the year, we bring to you a timely message from Charles Spurgeon's Library titled "Going Home — A Christmas Sermon." Delivered on December 21, 1856 we find this sermon timely even for today. We take a break from the RWB sermons but have still added some Christmas "shorts" as he would say.

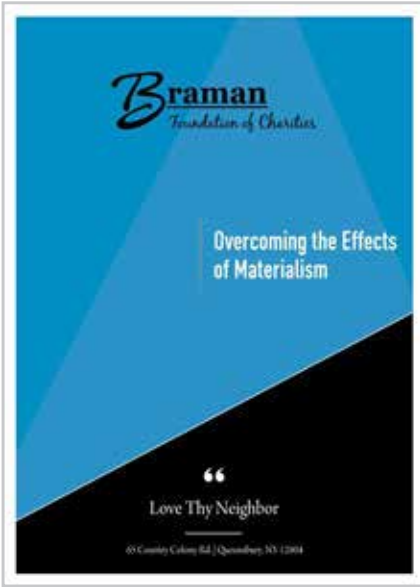
As you come into the season of Christ's birth, try to reflect on your year and its many blessings. Always know the Lord is omnipresent and as such is always near and dear to your heart. The Lord loves you and seeks all of you.

So in this issue of Discipleship we look into the theme of Christmas and always begin to peek into the new year of 2023. It is this timely message that the Lord's spirit is strongest. Many throughout the world are seeking a deeper relationship with God. Therefore, pray for world peace, pray for your Muslim brothers and sisters, pray for your Hindu brothers and sisters, and pray for your Jewish friends.

Always remember you were made in the divine nature of God. This is the truth, and in that nature you know love, you know peace, and you understand the Spirit of God because that is who you are: Made in His Divine Nature.

Friend, be ever blessed, and grow in the understanding of who you are in Christ and be in love with Jesus. He is then, is now, and shall always be in the cradle of your mind, your savior!

Merry Christmas,
BFC 2022



This is a simple program that sheds some light on:

- » *Pluralism*
- » *Human secularism*
- » *Materialism*
- » *Pride*

Especially in the United States we are experiencing a growing worldliness in the church. We see the idea of “self reliance” as a way of life. And a philosophy that all paths lead to Christ!

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The 2022 Scripture:

“But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not grow weary, they shall walk and not faint.”

BFC Devotional Magazine

Writers
BFC, Inc.

Editors
Francis Crandall

Art & Design
Matthew Cummings

A Christmas Message

When Will You Know That Christ Is With You?

Jesus was born in the cradle of Christ Consciousness twenty centuries ago. His universal Christ Consciousness is reborn in every born again person. Are you ready in the coming Christmas to expand your soul to behold within yourself the birth of the Omnipresent Christ?

To observe the birthday of Jesus with gifts and festivities shows some respect and attention to the ideals of his life. But to meditate and prepare your mind for the holy occasion of Christmas, that you may experience within yourself the birth of a new consciousness of universal brotherhood and love for all living creatures, is to really celebrate Christmas. Drive away from your mind all pride and prejudices that you may fittingly hold the omnipresent of Christ in your love-expanded bosom.

If at Christmas you find your strong will unconquered by the tests of temptations, know that Christ is born within you in reality.

If in the coming Christmas you can maintain inner peace when crucified with disquietude, know that Christ is with you.

If at Christmas you can meditate with deep joy in spite of the restless horde

of invading thoughts, know that Christ as the divine joy of meditation has manifested within you.

When you cannot be roused to wrath by crucifixion through others' wickedness, know that you are ready for Christ. When you feel love for all in spite of any hatred toward you know that an altar for Christ is created within you.

When all the time you can feel within you the ecstasy of unbroken joy of communion, know that Christ is with you evermore, and that within your deathless consciousness you will celebrate the true Christmas experience every moment, every minute, every day, every year, unto eternity.



Grow in
Understanding Devotions

In this book, explore and understand the meaning of true devotion. Grow in understanding of the commitment to the Lord and learn how to renounce the world. Go deeper in Jesus!

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An Understanding of Devotion,
Confession, Self Reflection
& Repentance

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Love Thy Neighbor

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Going Home – A Christmas Sermon

Mark 5:19

“Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee.”

The case of the man here referred to is a very extraordinary one: it occupies a place among the memorabilia of Christ's life, perhaps as high as anything which is recorded by either of the evangelists. This poor wretch being possessed with a legion of evil spirits had been driven to something worse than madness. He fixed his home among the tombs, where he dwelt by night and day, and was the terror of all those who passed by. The authorities had attempted to curb him; he had been bound with fetters and chains, but in the paroxysms of his madness he had torn the chains in sunder, and broken the fetters in pieces. Attempts had been made to reclaim him; but no man could tame him. He was worse than the wild beasts, for they might be tamed; but his fierce nature would not yield. He was a misery to himself, for he would run upon the mountains by night and day, crying and howling fearfully, cutting himself with the sharp flints, and torturing his poor body in the most frightful manner. Jesus Christ passed by; he said to the devils, “Come out of him.” The man was healed in a moment; he fell down at Jesus' feet; he became a rational being—an intelligent man, yea, what is more, a convert to the Saviour. Out of gratitude to his deliverer, he said, “Lord, I will follow

thee whithersoever thou goest; I will be thy constant companion and thy servant; permit me so to be.” “No,” said Christ, “I esteem your motive; it is one of gratitude to me; but if you would show your gratitude, ‘go home to thy friends and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee.’”

Now, this teaches us a very important fact, namely, this, that true religion does not break in sunder the bonds of family relationship. True religion seldom encroaches upon that sacred, I had almost said divine institution called home; it does not separate men from their families, and make them aliens to their flesh and blood. Superstition has done that; an awful superstition, which calls itself Christianity, has sundered men from their kind; but true religion has never done so. Why, if I might be allowed to do such a thing, I would seek out the hermit in his lonely cavern, and I would go to him and say, “Friend, if thou art what thou dost profess to be, a true servant of the living God, and not a hypocrite, as I guess thou art—if thou art a true believer in Christ, and would show forth what he has done for thee, upset that pitcher, eat the last piece of thy bread, leave this dreary cave,

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wash thy face, untie thy hempen girdle; and if thou wouldst show thy gratitude, go home to thy friends, and tell them what great things the Lord hath done for thee. Canst thou edify the sere leaves of the forest? Can the beasts learn to adore that God whom thy gratitude should strive to honor? Dost thou hope to convert these rocks, and wake the echoes into songs? Nay, go back; dwell with thy friends, reclaim thy kinship with men, and unite again with thy fellows, for this is Christ's approved way of showing gratitude." And I would go to every monastery and every nunnery, and say to the monks, 'Come out brethren, come out! If you are what you say you are, servants of God, go home to your friends. No more of this absurd discipline; it is not Christ's rule; you are acting differently from what he would

have you; go home to your friends!" And to the sisters of mercy we would say, "Be sisters of mercy to your own sisters; go home to your friends; take care of your aged parents; turn your own houses into convents; do not sit here nursing your pride by a disobedience to Christ's rule, which says, "go home to thy friends." "Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee." The love of a solitary and ascetic life, which is by some considered to be a divine virtue, is neither more nor less than a disease of the mind. In the ages when there was but little benevolence, and consequently few hands to build lunatic asylums, superstition supplied the lack of charity, and silly men and women were allowed the indulgence of their fancies in secluded

haunts or in easy laziness. Young has most truly said,—

“The first sure symptoms of a mind in health are rest of heart and pleasure found at home.”

Avoid, my friends, above all things, those romantic and absurd conceptions of virtue which are the offspring of superstition and the enemies of righteousness. Be not without natural affection, but love those who are knit to you by time of nature.

True religion cannot be inconsistent with nature. It never can demand that I should abstain from weeping when my friend is dead. “Jesus wept.” It cannot deny me the privilege of a smile, when providence looks favorably upon me; for once “Jesus rejoiced in the spirit, and said, Father, I thank thee.” It does not make a man say to his father and mother, “I am no longer your son.” That is not Christianity, but something worse than what beasts would do, which would lead us to be entirely sundered from our fellows, to walk among them as if we had no kinship with them. To all who think a solitary life must be a life of piety, I would say, “It is the greatest delusion.” To all who think that those must be good people who snap the ties of relationship, let us say, “Those are the best who maintain them.” Christianity makes a husband a better husband, it makes a wife a better wife than she was before. It does not free me from my duties as a son; it makes me a better son, and my parents better parents. Instead of weakening my love, it gives me fresh reason for my affection; and he whom I loved before as my father, I now love as my brother and co-worker in Christ Jesus; and she whom I revered as my mother, I now

love as my sister in the covenant of grace, to be mine for ever in the state that is to come. Oh! suppose not, any of you, that Christianity was ever meant to interfere with households; it is intended to cement them, and to make them households which death itself shall never sever, for it binds them up in the bundle of life with the Lord their God, and re-unites the several individuals on the other side of the flood.

Now, I will just tell you the reason why I selected my text. I thought within myself, there are a large number of young men who always come to hear me preach; they always crowd the aisles of my chapel, and many of them have been converted to God. Now, here is Christmas-day come round again, and they are going home to see their friends. When they get home they will want a Christmas Carol in the evening; I think I will suggest one to them—more especially to such of them as have been lately converted. I will give them a theme for their discourse on Christmas evening; it may not be quite so amusing as “The Wreck of the Golden Mary,” but it will be quite as interesting to Christian people. It shall be this: “Go home and tell your friends what the Lord hath done for your souls, and how he hath had compassion on you.” For my part, I wish there were twenty Christmas days in the year. It is seldom that young men can meet with their friends; it is rarely they can all be united as happy families; and though I have no respect to the religious observance of the day, yet I love it as a family institution, as one of England’s brightest days, the great Sabbath of the year, when the plough rests in its furrow, when the din of business is hushed, when the mechanic and the working man go out to refresh themselves upon the green

award of the glad earth. If any of you are masters you will pardon me for the digression, when I most respectfully beg you to pay your servants the same wages on Christmas-day as if they were at work. I am sure it will make their houses glad if you will do so. It is unfair for you to make them feast or fast, unless you give them wherewithal to feast and make themselves glad on that day of joy.

But now to come to the subject. We are going home to see our friends, and here is the story some of us have to tell. “Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for them, and hath had compassion on thee.” First, here is what they are to tell; secondly, why they are to tell it; and then thirdly, how they ought to tell it.

I. First, then, **HERE IS WHAT THEY ARE TO TELL.** It is to be a story of personal experience. “Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee.” You are not to repair to your houses and forthwith begin to preach. That you are not commanded to do. You are not to begin to take up doctrinal subjects and expatiate on them, and endeavour to bring persons to your peculiar views and sentiments. You are not to go home with sundry doctrines you have lately learned, and try to teach these. At least you are not commanded so to do; you may, if you please, and none shall hinder you; but you are to go home and tell not what you have believed, but what you have felt—what you really know to be your own; not what great things you have read, but what great things the Lord hath done for you; not alone what you have seen done in the great congregation, and how great sinners

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have turned to God, but what the Lord has done for you. And mark this: there is never a more interesting story than that which a man tells about himself. The Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner derives much of its interest because the man who told it was himself the mariner. He sat down, that man whose finger was skinny, like the finger of death, and began to tell that dismal story of the ship at sea in the great calm, when slimy things did crawl with legs over the shiny sea. The Wedding guest sat still to listen, for the old man was himself a story. There is always a great deal of interest excited by a personal narrative. Virgil, the poet, knew this, and therefore he wisely makes Aeneas tell his own story, and makes him begin it by saying, "In which I also had a great part myself." So if you would interest your friends, tell them what you felt yourself. Tell them how you were once a lost abandoned sinner, how the Lord met with you, how you bowed your knees, and poured out your soul before God, and how at last you leaped with joy, for you thought you heard him say within you, "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for my name's sake." Tell your friends a story of your own personal experience.

Note, next, it must be a story of free grace. It is not, "Tell thy friends how great things thou hast done thyself;" but "how great things the Lord hath done for thee." The man who always dwells upon free will and the power of the creature, and denies the doctrines of grace, invariably mixes up a great deal of what he has done himself in telling his experience; but the believer in free grace, who holds the great cardinal truths of the gospel, ignores this, and declares, "I will tell what the Lord hath done for me. It is true I must tell how I was first made to pray; but I will tell it

thus—

*'Grace taught my soul to pray,
Grace made my eyes o'erflow.'*

It is true, I must tell in how many troubles and trials God has been with me; but I will tell it thus:—

*"'Twas grace which kept me to this day,
And will not let me go."*

He says nothing about his own doings, or willings, or prayings, or seekings, but he ascribes it all to the love and grace of the great God who looks on sinners in love, and makes them his children, heirs of everlasting life. Go home, you man, and tell the poor sinner's story; go home, young woman, and open your diary, and give your friends stories of grace. Tell them of the mighty works of God's hand which he hath wrought in you from his own free, sovereign, undeserved love. Make it a free grace story around your family fire.

In the next place, this poor man's tale was a grateful story. I know it was grateful, because the man said, "I will tell thee how great things the Lord hath done for me;" and (not meaning a pun in the least degree) I may observe, that a man who is grateful is always full of the greatness of the mercy which God has shown him; he always thinks that what God has done for him is immensely good and supremely great. Perhaps when you are telling the story one of your friends will say, "And what of that?" And your answer will be, "It may not be a great thing to you, but it is to me. You say it is little to repent, but I have not found it so; it is a great and precious thing to be brought to know

myself to be a sinner, and to confess it; do you say it is a little thing to have found a Saviour." Look them in the face and say, "If you had found him too you would not think it little. You think it little I have lost the burden from my back; but if you had suffered with it, and felt its weight as I have for many a long year, you would think it no little thing to be emancipated and free, through a sight of the cross." Tell them it is a great story, and if they cannot see its greatness shed great tears, and tell it to them with great earnestness, and I hope they may be brought to believe that you at least are grateful, if they are not. May God grant that you may tell a grateful story. No story is more worth hearing than a tale of gratitude.

And lastly, upon this point: it must be a tale told by a poor sinner who feels himself not to have deserved what he has received. "How he hath had compassion on thee." It was not a mere act of kindness, but an act of free compassion towards one who was in misery. Oh! I have heard men tell the story of their conversion and of their spiritual life in such a way that my heart hath loathed them and their story too, for they have told of their sins as if they did boast in the greatness of their crime, and they have mentioned the love of God not with a tear of gratitude, not with the simple thanksgiving of the really humble heart, but as if they as much exalted themselves as they exalted God. Oh! when we tell the story of our own conversion, I would have it done with deep sorrow, remembering what we used to be, and with great joy and gratitude, remembering how little we deserve these things, I was once preaching upon conversion and salvation, and I felt within myself, as preachers often do, that it was but dry work to tell this story,

and a dull, dull tale it was to me; but on a sudden the thought crossed my mind, "Why, you are a poor lost ruined sinner yourself; tell it, tell it, as you received it; begin to tell of the grace of God as you trust you feel it yourself." Why, then, my eyes began to be fountains of tears; those hearers who had nodded their heads began to brighten up, and they listened, because they were hearing something which the man felt himself, and which they recognised as being true to him, if it was not true in them. Tell your story, my hearers, as lost sinners. Do not go to your home, and walk into your house with a supercilious air, as much as to say, "Here's a saint come home to the poor sinners, to tell them a story;" but go home like a poor sinner yourself; and when you go in, your mother remembers what you used to be, you need not tell her there is a change—she will notice it, if it is only one day you are with her; and perhaps she will say, "John, what is this change that is in you?" and if she is a pious mother, you will begin to tell her the story, and I know, man though you are, you will not blush when I say it, she will put her arms round your neck, and kiss you as she never did before, for you are her twice-born son, hers from whom she shall never part, even though death itself shall divide you for a brief moment. "Go home, then, and tell your friends what great things the Lord hath done for you, and how he hath had compassion on you."

II. But now, in the second place, WHY SHOULD WE TELL THIS STORY? For I hear many of my congregation say, "Sir, I could relate that story to any one sooner than I could to my own friends; I could come to your vestry, and tell you something of what I have tasted and handled of the Word of God; but I could

not tell my father, nor my mother, nor my brethren, nor my sisters." Come, then; I will try and argue with you, to induce you to do so, that I may send you home this Christmas-day, to be missionaries in the localities to which you belong, and to be real preachers, though you are not so by name. Dear friends, do tell this story when you go home.

First, for your Master's sake. Oh! I know you love him; I am sure you do, if you have proof that he loved you. You can never think of Gethsemane and of its bloody sweat, of Gabbatha and of the mangled back of Christ, flayed by the whip: you can never think of Calvary and his pierced hands and feet, without loving him; and it is a strong argument when I say to you, for his dear sake who loved you so much, go home and tell it. What! do you think we can have so much done for us, and yet not tell it? Our children, if anything should be done for them, do not stay many minutes before they are telling all the company, "such an one hath give me such a present, and bestowed on me such-and-such a favor." And should the children of God be backward in declaring how they were saved when their feet made haste to hell, and how redeeming mercy snatched them as brands from the burning? You love Jesus, young man! I put it to you, then, will you refuse to tell the tale of his love to you? Shall your lips be dumb, when his honor is concerned? Will you not, wherever you go, tell of the God who loved you and died for you? This poor man, we are told, "Departed and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him, and all men did marvel." So with you. If Christ has done much for you, you cannot help it—you must tell it. My esteemed friend, Mr. Oncken, a minister in Germany told

us last Monday evening, that so soon as he was converted himself, the first impulse of his new-born soul was to do good to others. And where should he do that good? Well, he thought he would go to Germany. It was his own native land, and he thought the command was, "Go home to thy friends and tell them." Well, there was not a single Baptist in all Germany, nor any with whom he could sympathise, for the Lutherans had swerved from the faith of Luther, and gone aside from the truth of God. But he went there and preached, and he has now seventy or eighty churches established on the continent. What made him do it? Nothing but love for his Master, who had done so much for him, could have forced him to go and tell his kinsmen the marvellous tale of Divine goodness.

But, in the next place, are your friends pious? Then go home and tell them, in order to make their hearts glad. I received last night a short epistle written with a trembling hand by one who is past the natural age of man, living in the country of Essex. His son, under God, had been converted by hearing the Word preached, and the good man could not help writing to the minister, thanking him, and blessing most of all, his God, that his son had been regenerated. "Sir," he begins, "an old rebel writes to thank you, and above all to thank his God, that his dear son has been converted." I shall treasure up that epistle. It goes on to say, "Go on! and the Lord bless you." And there was another case I heard some time ago, where a young woman went home to her parents, and when her mother saw her, she said, "There! if the minister had made me a present of all London, I should not have thought so much of it as I do of this—to think that you have really

become a changed character, and are living in the fear of God." Oh! if you want to make your mother's heart leap within her, and to make your father glad—if you would make that sister happy who sent you so many letters, which sometimes you read against a lamp-post, with your pipe in your mouth—go home and tell your mother that her wishes are all accomplished, that her prayers are heard, that you will no longer chaff her about her Sunday-school class, and no longer laugh at her because she loves the Lord, but that you will go with her to the house of God, for you love God, and you have said, "Your people shall be my people, and your God shall be my God, for I have a hope that your heaven shall be my heaven for ever." Oh! what a happy thing it would be if some here who had gone astray, should thus go home! It was my privilege a little while ago to preach for a noble institution for the reception of women who had led abandoned lives—and before I preached the sermon I prayed to God to bless it, and in the printed sermon you will notice that at the end of it there is an account of two persons who were blessed by that sermon and restored. Now, let me tell you a story of what happened to Mr. Vanderkist, a city missionary, who toils all night long to do good in that great work. There had been a drunken broil in the street; he stepped between the men to part them, and said something to a woman who stood there concerning how dreadful a thing it was that men should thus be intemperate. She walked with him a little way, and he with her, and she began to tell him such a tale of woe and sin too—how she had been lured away from her parents' home in Somersetshire, and have been brought up here to her soul's eternal hurt. He took her home with him, and taught her the fear and love of Christ;

and what was the first thing she did, when she returned to the paths of godliness, and found Christ to be the sinner's Saviour? She said, "Now, I must go home to my friends." Her friends were written to; they came to meet her at the station at Bristol, and you can hardly conceive what a happy meeting it was. The father and mother had lost their daughter, they had never heard from her; and there she was, brought back by the agency of this institution, and restored to the bosom of her family. Ah! if such an one be here! I know not; among such a multitude there may be such an one. Woman! hast thou strayed from thy family? Hast thou left them long? "Go home to thy friends," I beseech thee, ere thy father totters to his grave, and ere thy mother's grey hairs sleep on the snow-white pillow of her coffin. Go back. I beseech thee! Tell her thou art penitent; tell her that God hath met with thee—that the young minister said, "Go back to thy friends." And if so, I shall not blush to have said these things, though you may think I ought not to have mentioned them; for if I may but win one such soul, I will bless God to all eternity. "Go home to thy friends. Go home and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee." Cannot you imagine the scene, when the poor demoniac mentioned in my text went home? He had been a raving madman; and when he came and knocked at the door, don't you think you see his friends calling to one another in affright, "Oh! there he is again," and the mother running up stairs and locking all the doors, because her son had come back that was raving mad; and the little ones crying because they knew what he had been before—how he cut himself with stones, because he was possessed with devils. And can you picture their joy, when the man said, "Mother! Jesus Christ

has healed me; let me in; I am no lunatic now!" And when the father opened the door, he said, "Father! I am not what I was; all the evil spirits are gone; I shall live in the tombs no longer. I want to tell you how the glorious man who wrought my deliverance accomplished the miracle—how he said to the devils, 'Get ye hence,' and they ran down a steep place into the sea, and I am come home healed and saved." Oh! if such an one, possessed with sin, were here this morning, and would go home to his friends, to tell them of his release, methinks this scene would be somewhat similar.

Once more, dear friends. I hear one of you say. "Ah! Sir, would to God I could go home to pious friends! But when I go home I go into the worst of places; for my home is amongst those who never knew God themselves, and consequently never prayed for me, and never taught me anything concerning heaven." Well, young man, go home to your friends. If they are ever so bad they are your friends. I sometimes meet with young men wishing to join the church, who say, when I ask them about their father, "Oh, sir, I am parted from my father." Then I say, "Young man, you may just go and see your father before I have anything to do with you; if you are at ill-will with your father and mother I will not receive you into the church; if they are ever so bad they are your parents." Go home to them, and tell them, not to make them glad, for they will very likely be angry with you; but tell them for their soul's salvation. I hope, when you are telling the story of what God did for you, that they will be led by the Spirit to desire the same mercy themselves. But I will give you a piece of advice. Do not tell this story to your godly friends when

they are all together, for they will laugh at you. Take them one by one, when you can get them alone, and begin to tell it to them, and they will hear you seriously. There was once a very pious lady who kept a lodging-house for young men. All the young men were very gay and giddy, and she wanted to say something to them concerning religion. She introduced the subject, and it was passed off immediately with a laugh. She thought within herself, "I have made a mistake." The next morning, after breakfast, when they were all going, she said to one of them, "Sir, I should like to speak with you a moment or two," and taking him aside into another room she talked with him. The next morning she took another, and the next morning another, and it pleased God to bless her simple statement, when it was given individually: but, without doubt, if she had spoken to them altogether, they would have backed each other up in laughing her to scorn. Reprove a man alone. A verse may hit him whom a sermon flies. You may be the means of bringing a man to Christ who has often heard the Word and only laughed at it, but who cannot resist a gentle admonition. In one of the states of America, there was an infidel who was a great despiser of God, a hater of the Sabbath and all religious institutions. What to do with him the ministers did not know. They met together and prayed for him. But among the rest, one Elder B _____ resolved to spend a long time in prayer for the man; after that he got on horseback, and rode down to the man's forge, for he was a blacksmith. He left his horse outside, and said, "Neighbour, I am under very great concern about your soul's salvation; I tell you I pray day and night for your soul's salvation." He left him, and rode home on his horse. The man went inside to his

house after a minute or two, and said to one of his faithful friends, "Here's a new argument; here's Elder Back been down here, he did not dispute, and never said a word to me except this, 'I say, I am under great concern about your soul; I cannot bear that you should be lost.' Oh! that fellow," he said, "I cannot answer him;" and the tears began to roll down his cheeks. He went to his wife, and said, "I can't make this out; I never cared about my soul, but here's an elder, that has no connection with me, but I have always laughed at him, and he has come five miles this morning on horseback just to tell me he is under concern about my salvation. After a little while he thought it was time he should be under concern about his salvation too. He went in, shut the door, began to pray, and the next day he was at the deacon's house, telling him that he too was under concern about his salvation, and asking him to tell him what he must do to be saved. Oh! that the everlasting God might make use of some of those now present in the same way, that they might be induced to

"Tell to others round

What a dear Saviour they have found;

To point to his redeeming blood,

And say, Behold the way to God!"

II. I shall not detain you much longer; but there is a third point, upon which we must be very brief. HOW IS THIS STORY TO BE TOLD?

First, tell it truthfully. Do not tell more than you know; do not tell John Bunyan's experience, when you ought to tell your own. Do not tell your mother you have felt what only Rutherford felt. Tell her no more than the truth. Tell your experience

truthfully; for mayhap one single fly in the pot of ointment will spoil it, and one statement you may make which is not true may ruin it all. Tell the story truthfully.

In the next place, tell it very humbly. I have said that before. Do not intrude yourselves upon those who are older, and know more; but tell your story humbly; not as a preacher, not ex-cathedra, but as a friend and as a son.

Next, tell it very earnestly. Let them see you mean it. Do not talk about religion flippantly; you will do not good if you do. Do not make puns on texts; do not quote Scripture by way of joke: if you do, you may talk till you are dumb, you will do no good, if you in the least degree give them occasion to laugh by laughing at holy things yourself. Tell it very earnestly.

And then, tell it very devoutly. Do not try to tell your tale to man till you have told it first to God. When you are at home on Christmas-day, let no one see your face till God has seen it. Be up in the morning, wrestle with God; and if your friends are not converted, wrestle with God for them; and then you will find it easy work to wrestle with them for God. Seek, if you can, to get them one by one, and tell them the story. Do not be afraid; only think of the good you may possibly do. Remember, he that saves a soul from death hath covereth a multitude of sins, and he shall have stars in his crown for ever and ever. Seek to be under God—Saviours in your family, to be the means of leading your own beloved brethren and sisters to seek and to find the Lord Jesus Christ, and then one day, when you shall meet in Paradise, it will be a joy and blessedness to think that you are there, and that your friends are there too, whom

God will have made you the instrument of saving. Let your reliance in the Holy Spirit be entire and honest. Trust not yourself, but fear not to trust him. He can give you words. He can apply those words to their heart, and so enable you to “minister grace to the hearers.”

To close up, by a short, and I think, a pleasant turning of the text, to suggest another meaning to it. Soon, dear friends, very soon with some of us, the Master will say, “Go home to thy friends.” You know where the home is. It is up above the stars.

*“Where our best friends, our kindred dwell,
Where God our Saviour reigns.”*

Yon grey-headed man has buried all his friends; he has said, “I shall go to them, but they will not return to me.” Soon his Master will say, “Thou hast had enough tarrying here in this vale of tears: go home to thy friends!” Oh! happy hour! Oh! blessed moment, when that shall be the word—“Go home to thy friends!” And when we go home to our friends in Paradise, what shall we do? Why, first we will repair to that blest seat where Jesus sits, take off our crown and cast it at his feet, and crown him Lord of all. And when we have done that, what shall be our next employ? Why, we will tell the blessed ones in heaven what the Lord hath done for us, and how he hath had compassion on us. And shall such a tale be told in heaven? Shall that be the Christmas Carol of the angels? Yes, it shall be; it has been published there before—blush not to tell it yet again—for Jesus has told it before, “When he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost.”

And thou, poor sheep, when thou shall be gathered in, wilt thou not tell how thy Shepherd sought thee, and how he found thee? Will thou not sit in the grassy meads of heaven, and tell the story of thine own redemption? Wilt thou not talk with thy brethren and thy sisters, and tell them how God loved thee and hath brought thee there? Perhaps thou sayest, “It will be a very short story.” Ah! it would be if you could write now. A little book might be the whole of your biography; but up there when your memory shall be enlarged, when your passion shall be purified and your understanding clear, you will find that what was but a tract on earth will be a huge tome in heaven. You will tell a long story there of God’s sustaining, restraining, constraining grace, and I think that when you pause to let another tell his tale, and then another, and then another, you will at last, when you have been in heaven a thousand years, break out and exclaim, “O saints, I have something else to say.” Again they will tell their tales, and again you will interrupt them with “Oh, beloved, I have thought of another case of God’s delivering mercy.” And so you will go on, giving them themes for songs, finding them the material for the warp and woof of heavenly sonnets. “Go home,” he will soon say, “go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee.” Wait awhile; tarry his leisure, and ye shall soon be gathered to the land of the hereafter, to the home of the blessed, where endless felicity shall be thy portion. God grant a blessing for his name’s sake!

Good Tidings of Joy Let Us Rejoice

Let us make this Christmas a real celebration of the birth of the holy child by striving to realize the consciousness which he attained.

Let us make this celebration an uplifting and spiritual experience.

Let us not for a moment forget the one whose birthday is being commemorated while in our zeal we go about the joyful and exciting preparation of the happy festivities.

Let us use this occasion as a new impetus to inspire us on the Christ-path of truth and love.

Let us use it as an opportunity to express the Universal Christ-love for all people and all creatures—exalted and lowly, near and far, large and small, known and unknown.

While we are remembering the physical birth of the baby Christ Jesus, let us realize his eternal loving presence in omnipresent Christ Consciousness, which is always with us no matter where we are or what we are doing.

Let us resolve anew to discipline ourselves—to control our bodies, our minds, and our emotions—and to strive ever toward Christ understanding.

Let us establish the Prince of Peace consciousness as our inner ruler, that we may meet our crosses and tests of life

with power, victory, and tranquility.

Let us meditate until we perceive the Infinite Christ reigning in our own hearts.

Let us learn to love those who love us not; and to forgive those who do ill against us.

Let us break all our mental boundaries of color, creed, and nationality, and receive all—even our inanimate and animal brothers—in the endless, all-embracing arms of our Christ Consciousness. This will be a true and fitting celebration of the coming of Jesus Christ to this earth.

Let us rejoice and give thanks for this wonderful gift of light and love from the Great Giver.

Peace. Joy. Peace.

WHY DOES FEAR RULE YOUR LIFE?

Learn to memorize the most powerful scriptures in dealing with fear.

“For God has not given us a spirit of fear but of power, love, and self control.”

2 Timothy 1:7

“Behold God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid; for the Lord God is my strength and song, and He has come my salvation.”

Isaiah 12:2

“Do not fear, for I am with you, do not anxiously look ahead for I am your God, I will strengthen you.”

Isaiah 41:10



December 2022

December 1, 2022

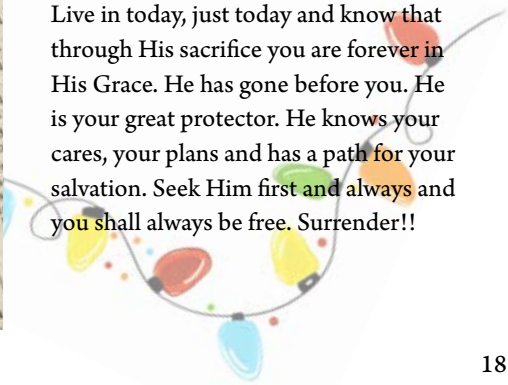
Thursday

Do Not be Anxious About Your Life

"Do not be anxious about your life... But seek ye first His Kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto to you... Let the day's own trouble be sufficient for the day."

– Matthew 6:25-33

The world can creep in quickly. We must be on guard for this always. First surrendering our day daily in prayer and meditation on His word brings our focus into Him. Knowing the word helps keep our mind focused on Him. It is worldliness that is trying to steal you away. In the form of your money or lack thereof, perhaps your family and their troubles, perhaps your church, maybe it is your work or your health that is distracting the joy, the love, the peace of the Spirit of the Lord. Regardless, this is why Christ spends so much time on this subject. Let not this world and the cares of this world remove you from His presence. Live in today, just today and know that through His sacrifice you are forever in His Grace. He has gone before you. He is your great protector. He knows your cares, your plans and has a path for your salvation. Seek Him first and always and you shall always be free. Surrender!!



December 2, 2022

Friday

Are You Living a Consecrated Life?

“This is he who hears the word, but the cares of the world and its pleasures and delights and clamor of riches and deceitfulness of riches choke and suffocate the word, and it yields no fruit.”

– Matthew 13:22

This world yields an illusion that it lasts forever. That somehow all that is here is so real. Think of the Lord’s words: “Consider the lilies of the field. They neither toil nor spin yet are in their full splendor. Are you not more than they?” We spend so much time figuring out our lives. Yet if we would just be still and grow where we are planted all would be fine. We must stop deciding how to serve the Lord, run our lives and allow the cares of this world to be surrendered in the Lord. Start by spending more and more time in reading the word. If you say I am too busy then ask the Lord to help you slow down. Try getting on your knees as you roll out of bed and ask for forgiveness. Ask to be forgiven for running the show. Spend time in prayer, fasting, meditation. Separate yourself from the world through an annual retreat. Remember soon you will be leaving here so why don’t you get acquainted with your true home. You are wasting time, God already has a plan for you.

December 3, 2022

Saturday

Are You Leaving Room for God?

“Seek first the Kingdom of God...”

– Matthew 6:33

Is our agenda in our lives or in our work or business or our personal lives more important than the presence of God? Does your church acknowledge the presence of God? If God showed up would we say: “Oh no none of that!! We must preach our sermon!!!!” Our lives are an agenda. We are the god of our lives, doing works that we believe we are called to do “In the name of Christ.” Yet we lack power. Are lives changing in your congregation? If God showed up would you know that presence? Seek the Lord before all you do and ask that His presence be in you and around you. Before embarking upon works in the name of the Lord, first ask: “Lord is this what you want of me?” Then listen to the still small voice. Change yourself so that you know His presence and you will reform hundreds perhaps thousands. Make God your heart song: Above your spouse, your children, your money, your works and yes even your church. Try not to allow your works in your church be another way into which you seek recognition.

December 4, 2022

Sunday

We Are Servants

“And there shall be no more curse: But the throne of God and of the Lamb of God shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him. And they shall see His face and his name shall be on their foreheads.”

– Revelation 22:3-4

We have been chosen by Christ to serve Christ. We have confessed our sin, we have turned to the Lord and we have taken a public declaration of that fact through Baptism. If this is you; then you are working through your salvation through regeneration. You are being changed from Glory to Glory and your life is not your own. Therefore, STOP telling the Lord what you are going to do and then asking Him to Bless it or whatever you are doing. Daily confess and daily die to self. Change your life so you are kingdom minded and not caught up in this world. Soon you will not even be here, so why do you toil as if it is so important? You are here today and gone tomorrow. Is not now the time to get right with God? Just ask someone who is about to make his or her transition. What is important, provided you are a believer, is our Lord. He is ruler over our government we are His servants. Get on with serving NOT controlling. In the end your life is moving on as is everyone. How important is your work here? What are you doing to serve?

December 5, 2022

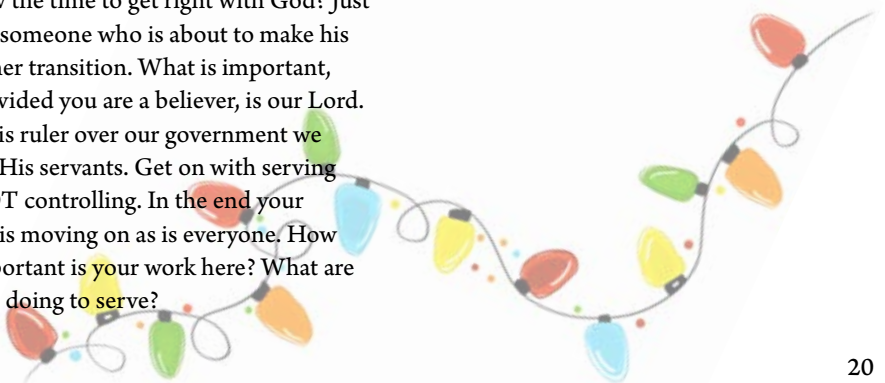
Monday

Oneness in Christ

“But the person who is united in the Lord becomes one spirit with the Lord.”

– 1 Corinthians 16:17

We must boldly daily die to self. We must ask more and more of thee and less and less of me. This is the mystery of our faith for we, on our own effort cannot complete this task. No matter how hard we toil to relinquish self it is the work of Grace. Only through surrender and seeking He that is greater than us all can you find this unification in Christ. This work is done in the solitude of your prayer closet. Ask yourself this question: Am I growing stale to the wonder of being born again? Am I chasing that feeling of oneness I once had in Christ? If so get at repentance. Get down on your knees and ask for forgiveness. Surrender my friend and now that there is only one way to fill your void. Know Christ!!!!



December 6, 2022

Tuesday

You Are Not Your Own

“Do you not know that your body is the temple of the holy spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore, glorify God in your body.”

– 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

If you are a believer and you have surrendered your life in Christ OR to Christ, then you have been bought by a price: Christ’s sacrifice on the cross. Therefore, your body is not your own. And the Holy Spirit dwells within you. Ask this: Does what I eat, what I say, and what I do Glorify God all the time? If not continue to surrender more and more until it does. This is a command as a disciple of Christ. Your body is not your own.

December 7, 2022

Wednesday

The Lord Fights Our Battles

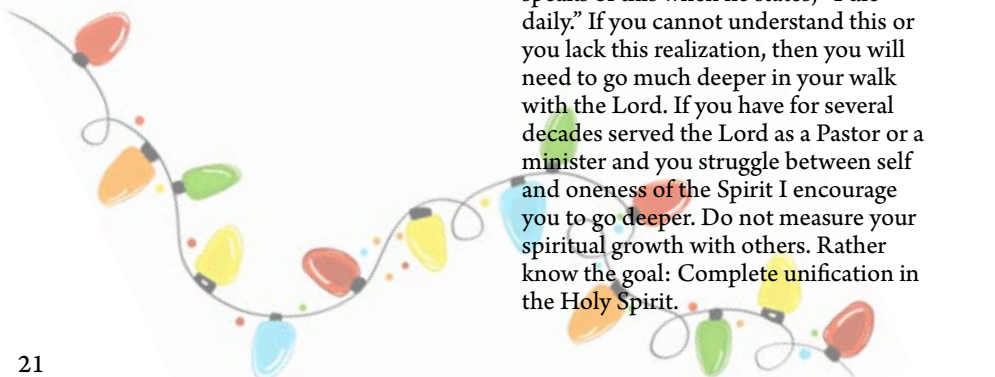
“The Lord will fight for you while you keep silent.”

– Exodus 14:14

“For the Lord Thy God is the one that goes with you to fight for you against your enemies to give you Victory.”

– Deuteronomy 20:4

My battles are not my own. Even if through sin I have created them. If I am overly stressed and not manifesting the fruit of the spirit, Gal 5:22, then self is manifesting. I as self am not in charge of my life. It is God through the Holy Spirit that goeth before me to open doors and close doors that no man can open. I in the Holy Spirit, that is I have been transformed through regeneration in Christ, doeth the works. This is the real battle. More and more of thee and less and less of me, (self). This is what Christ meant: IT IS NOT I THAT DOETH THE WORKS BUT HE THAT DWELTH WITHIN ME THAT DOES. This is the Lord’s work. There is effort, but it is the final battle is through Grace, through mercy. Paul speaks of this when he states; “I die daily.” If you cannot understand this or you lack this realization, then you will need to go much deeper in your walk with the Lord. If you have for several decades served the Lord as a Pastor or a minister and you struggle between self and oneness of the Spirit I encourage you to go deeper. Do not measure your spiritual growth with others. Rather know the goal: Complete unification in the Holy Spirit.



December 8, 2022

Thursday

Correction

“Then they will comfort you when you see their conduct and actions, for you will know that I have not done in vain whatever I did to it, declares the Lord.”

– Ezekiel 14:23

We want to grow closer in our walk with the Lord, yet we struggle when we go through correction. We try to avoid correction through aversion, yet it is this very correction that brings us in a deeper relationship with the Lord. Or we would hope our circumstances would be different as we compare our lives with others. Yet we forget that as believers we are in covenant with the Lord. He is our protector, He is guiding our every step, He is bringing us into a deeper relationship with Him. So, when you seek: “more and more of Him and less and less of me”; do not be surprised if your correction is painful or if He sends you someone to work with and pray with that rub you the wrong way. The Lord is in control even when you think not.

December 9, 2022

Friday

Judge Not

“Then let us no more criticize and blame and pass judgement on one another, but rather decide and endeavor never to put a stumbling block or an obstacle or a hinderance in the way of a brother”

– Romans 14:13

This judging is rooted in Pride and Fear. We need to go to God in Christ and ask forgiveness, seek a deeper level of repentance to be restored in His love. Our self must continually be purified once we have sought through salvation “The Way” in Christ. In other words, if you can identify the day you were saved then your regeneration has begun and as a follower repentance is key. Ask in your daily prayers: “Lord reveal to me the pride and fear the separates me from the love of Thee and the love of my fellow-man. If sincere listen to the still small voice within and you will be guided to deeper repentance and sorrow for the separation caused by your sin. Then renounce this in His name you will be forgiven. Go to Him and seek deeper levels of commitment to “The Way.”



December 10, 2022

Saturday

Christ Is With You

"...go unto the cities and see that you hasten the matter..."

– 2 Chronicles 24:5

When you know you have a task to perform before you get it done. For some of us we struggle with a lack of success or we could be used through God by a greater extent if we preformed the tasked at hand and move on to the next project. Yet we become stuck, working under half-measures, similar to an automobile that needs a "tune up." Others, through self-will perform tasks thinking that what they are doing is in the will of God only to realize when done, later down the line, that the direction in which they moved was wrong and now correction is needed. Regardless of your lot move forward. In this new year finish tasks that you have put off so that greater tasks will be given to you. Ask the Lord; "Please show me where I am slothful and reveal to me the fear that is motivating this sloth." Remember always that God has not given us a spirit of fear but a spirit of power, love and self-control. However, you must ask to receive.

December 11, 2022

Sunday

Continue to Praise

"Count it all joy my brothers when you meet trials of various kinds."

– James 1:2

Whether the sun is shining or not lift your hands to the Lord. Let not your heart be troubled rather praise the Lord. It may be dark you may be depressed but lift your hands to the Lord and thank Him. Do not stop praising until you feel His presence within you. Trials will come, life will be stressful, and circumstances may not go your way but praise the Lord anyway. Surrender all to the Lord. Know that the Lord is with you always. Count these difficulties joy that bring you closer to the Lord. Renounce those tendencies that are destructive in your life. Then you will be of greater use, of a greater capacity to be used through your surrender. Praise the Lord.



December 12, 2022

Monday

Continue to Surrender

“Draw near to God, and He will draw near unto you. Cleanse your hands you sinners and purify your hearts you double minded.”

– James 4:8

As children of God we are to continue to draw near unto God always. As we grow in our salvation from the day we were saved we must continue to renounce destructive patterns that are rooted in sin. Our sin nature is rooted in the Fall, generational curses and just sin behavior. Today in our churches we do not speak of sin or our sin natures. We tend to Praise and worship as if we are whole, not sinful through our self. Yet look at our society. Our nation would be completely different if the church, the body of believers, were following Christ commandments: mainly to love Thy neighbor as ourselves. And yet we continue to push others away because they are different: Poor, homeless, addicted, messy, trans-gendered, homosexual, filthy and mean. Ask yourself what would Christ do? Ask God are you really drawing unto Christ daily? Do you judge the fruit of the Spirit solely through your abundance of your purse? Are you really happy to see our nation struggling so that you continue to Praise God and Worship as if nothing is wrong in American Society? When will you reach out to the suffering? When will you love others.? If we were truly drawing onto God, we would be so sick of what is happening around us that we would ask God to use us to change our world?

December 13, 2022

Tuesday

Give of Yourself

“Then, opening their treasures, they presented to Him gifts of Gold, Frankincense, and myrrh.”

– Matthew 2:11

From John Ellerton: “Give yourself anew to God and to God’s Service, and He will give you the desire and the power to open your treasures; and give to Him, be it wealth, it may be time, it may be personal service, it may be life itself. In His store there is a place for all, for all tears of the penitent, the barley loaves of the child, the two mites of the widow, and the savings of the Philippians, deep poverty, as well as Mary’s ointment, for the land o Barnabas, for the gold and incense and myrrh of the Eastern ages. And if the vision of Christ be before His eyes, and the love of Christ be in His heart, the man of wealth will give his large offering, the man of learning his dear bought knowledge, his man of business his hard-earned leisure, for the glory of God, for the benefit of His fellow-man, for the church or for the poor, to feed the hungry, or to teach the ignorant, to help the struggling, or to guide the erring; and each gift will be welcomed by Him who gave Himself for us all, and who asks in return for ourselves as a living sacrifice to Him.”

December 14, 2022

Wednesday

The Word is Alive

“The word of God is living and breathing and active and sharper than any two-edged sword and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”

– Hebrews 4:12

As a believer in Christ, as His follower you are given the Word of God as a living and breathing document. If the word says it will protect you it is true. If the word says that you must overcome fear and to be strong you need to summon the courage to overcome. If the word says you are part of His royal family, the apple of His “I” then you are so. If the word says “NO”, then be obedient to the word. For many believers say they hear from God yet their lives are futile. It is very difficult to know the difference from self-speak and the Holy spirit. It takes an abandonment of one’s self and to be filled with the Holy Spirit in total to hear from God always. But you can always hear from God through the Word. This is true. Therefore, study the word, memorize the word, preach the word and let it always be your true guide.

December 15, 2022

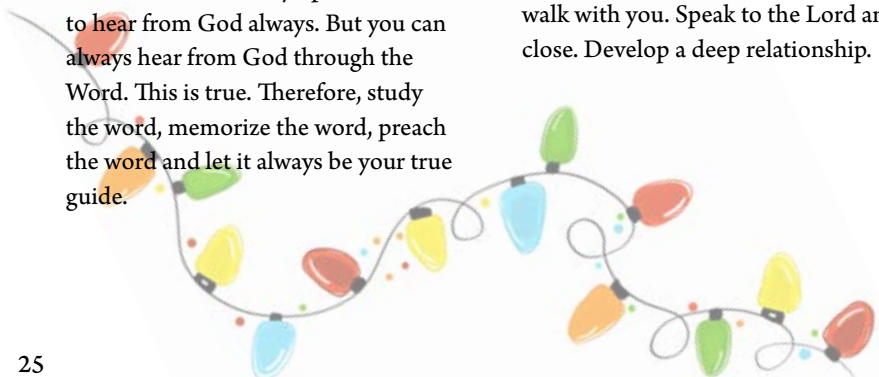
Thursday

Do You Love Christ?

“How blessed is everyone that fears the Lord. Who walks in His ways. When you eat of the fruit of your hands, you will be happy, and it will be well for you. Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine within your house, your children like olive plants around your table. Behold for thus shall the man be blessed who fears the Lord.”

– Psalm 128:1-4

As a believer in the Lord you are given Divine Favor. In fact, the deeper your walk with the Lord the greater your Favor. Yielding to self and overcoming this world. When more and more of the Holy Spirit is in you and less and less of self; then favor will increase. There are rewards for being in this relationship. Protection is favor. Wherever you go the hand of the Lord is upon you. The Lord goes before you and prepares the way. The Lord provides healing: Whether emotional, mental, spiritual or physical. Yield to the Lord. Ask Him to guide you and walk with you. Speak to the Lord and be close. Develop a deep relationship.



December 16, 2022

Friday

God Is and Shall Always Be

"For this God is our God forever and ever; He will be our Guide."

– Psalm 48:14

God is the same today yesterday and always. At times our faith may be shaken, and we ask ourselves, "Is God really in control? Look at the world and look at the darkness." Yet we must remember that God, in this drama has given man free will. A will that when out of Grace and Mercy is controlled solely through the law of sowing and reaping. Unbelievers are governed through self. The natural fall through Adam. As that result unbelievers suffer and are lost to their unbelief. We as believers must love them as Christ has asked us to love our neighbor. So, understand that God is was and shall always be regardless of what is happening outside of yourself in this world. This world is ever-changing and is not your home. You are going to spend your eternity with Christ in the heavenly realm. You have been given that security in your faith. You must act upon that faith and bring others home also. This is the great commission.

December 17, 2022

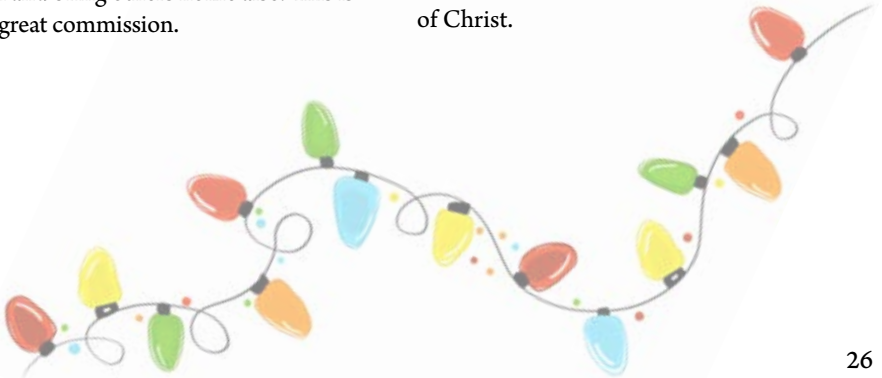
Saturday

Put Away the Old Self

"And put on your new Self which is in the likeness of God created in Holiness, righteousness and truth."

– Ephesians 4:24

We cannot be effective to the Lord in our old self. Therefore, we must ask the Lord to regenerate our lives daily. This process of regeneration can be quickened through doing all that you do, speak or think in the name of Christ. Our old self will wither away. However, if we will continue to hold fast to tendencies, strongholds, habits that have been useful to the natural self or to the world or not compatible with Kingdom building this will stunt our growth with working with the Lord. We must put away this self and put on our new likeness in Christ. But how you ask? Through His Grace, through asking and through daily surrender of the old self. Let your new year take on new meaning as you put away the old and take on new, the newness the likeness of Christ.



December 18, 2022

Sunday

Look at Your Own Sin

"He among you that is without sin cast the first stone."

– John 8:7

It is so easy to look at someone's life and say: Oh, if he or she would only do this or that then they would be fine. Why can't they just follow my suggestion. As if God has anointed you Christ and you are here to redeem the world!!!! First of all, it is hard to look at your life, your actions, your hurts, your trouble and admit: I, too, am sowing and reaping daily. I may be saved by Grace but through my regeneration I am sowing and reaping daily. I am responsible for everything that happens to me. This is a spiritual fact; Disease, car accidents all things are governed by this principle and through Grace we are given unmerited favor. We do not get what we deserve. Think about the idea of loving your neighbor instead of judging just because he or she does not meet your standard. Or if you are on the depressive side and see yourself as less than others, ask this: Why don't you give yourself a break and let God led you. You're not a bad person just sick and need of restoration. Regardless of our lot, IF WE HAVE SURRENDERED TO CHRIST, we are all going through a regeneration. Bless one another and love one another. Put on the likeness of Christ!!

December 19, 2022

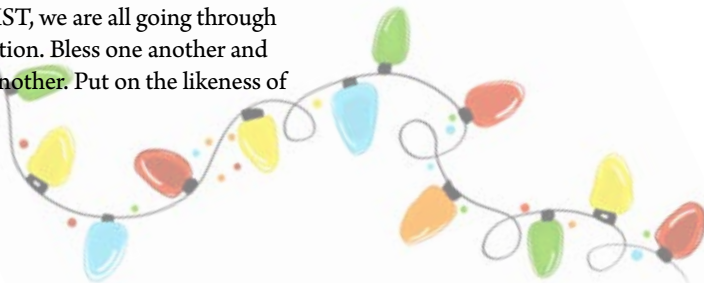
Monday

Forgiveness

"Be yea kind to one another, tenderhearted, FORGIVING one another as Christ has forgiven you."

– Ephesians 4:32

Reflect on the child likeness of forgiveness. Now reflect upon your bitterness or resentment or grudge you hold toward others. Perhaps an ex-spouse, a team-mate, a sibling, a parent it could be anyone. Now think of that bitterness times billions of souls holding grudges throughout the world. Very sad no wonder the world is in the shape it is. Very difficult for the sun light of the Spirit to penetrate such bitterness. There is very good energy all around this time of year. Billions are celebrating religious festivities. individuals are excited with the new year approaching. New plans, new relationships, healing of old ones. Spend some time this season and forgive those individuals you have been resenting or holding a grudge. Why not give them a break Christ has given you a break?



December 20, 2022

Tuesday

In Whom is Your Salvation?

“Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved”

– Acts 4:12

Consider your salvation and where it comes from now. Ask yourself is Christ the center of my life my salvation or are there more important circumstances or situations? Perhaps your spouse, your disabled child. Perhaps your family is more important than your salvation. Perhaps the church in which you serve. Maybe a committee you chair in that church is more important. Perhaps is your money, your career that is your salvation. If you are depressed and lonely maybe it's your depression medication that is your salvation. If you are using street drugs maybe those or alcohol.

December 21, 2022

Wednesday

Truth

“And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created Him, both male and female.”

– Genesis 1:27

Also read: Gen 5:1, 1 COR 11:7, Luke 17:21, John 14:23 & James 3:9

It is vital to gain this truth. For every soul you encounter is made in the likeness of God. Regardless of the flawed exterior, the shallow emotions, or mental dullness you are in the presence of God. Of course, as Law writes to really activate, to be conscious of this truth we need to be born again. Yet it too is only a beginning. The real work of salvation is elimination of self in which is mainly through the Grace of God. So, remember this truth the next time so and so offends you or a driver cuts you off. Send them a well wish, a blessing or better yet why not pray for those that persecute you???? What an idea!!!!



December 22, 2022

Thursday

Complete Surrender

“Jesus saith, ‘I am the way the truth and the life no one comes to the father except through me.’”

– John 14:6

He goes on to write that it must be a force of his will to conform to Christ. To be determined to overcome this world. This speaks, of course, to our current church as a whole. We do good in getting souls into church and getting them saved through the Holy Spirit. Yet that is where personal growth has stopped in our church body. Worldliness has crept in and many of us evaluate our success not with our personal relationship with Christ but rather our: Material success, our educational success, the success of our children, the number of church members in our congregations, etc. etc. Worldliness has crept into the American church. So, Holiness is lacking and moreover on a personal level surrendering your life to Christ daily must not stop because you are saved. Millions need your help in America and that help starts with the Holy Spirit starting with you in your family, your neighborhood, your church and finally your community. Get on fire for the Lord and reform others.

December 23, 2022

Friday

Christ: The Second Adam

“ So it is also written, “ The first Adam became a living soul.” The last Adam became a life giving Spirit.”

– 1 Corinthians 15:45

Adam’s righteousness was ours as long as he maintained it and his sin was ours the moment that he committed it; and in the same manner, all that the Second Adam is or does, is ours as well as His, seeing that He is our Representative.” Here is the foundation of the covenant of grace. Our entire salvation as a believer in Christ is grounded in this fact: That the first Adam failed and that Christ has come as the replacement of the first Adam, and that through Christ, the incarnate God, we are given freedom from our iniquities. Can you say AMEN!! Do you even truly realize the truth in this incarnation of Love? That God through the birth of Christ incarnation here on this planet, gave up His only son so that we could be given the opportunity to confess and seek the Lord as our true redemption. Merry Christmas!!



December 24, 2021

Saturday

God Will Keep You Safe

“Keep me safe O God for I have come to you for refuge. Troubles multi for those that chase after other gods. I shall not partake. You alone are my cup of salvation.”

– Psalm 16:1-4

Are you worshipping the living God of Abraham, Issac and Jacob? There is only one God. What tends to be on your mind instead of your living God? Are you struggling with fear: Afraid you cannot give the Christmas that society has you conformed to? Remember this season is not about Materialism but about the birth of the King of Kings: Jesus Christ. Learn to yield to His mercy and Grace. Surrender this idea that you are separated from the Living God and be renewed through the presence of the Holy Spirit. Be not conformed to the standards of this world. Jesus awaits you now.

December 25, 2022

Sunday

‘Tis the Season

“Thine is the day Thine is the night; thou hast prepared the light and the sun. Thou hast established all the boundaries of the earth; Thou hast made summer and winter.”

– Psalm 74:16-17

‘Tis the season that we usher in the coming of the Lord. And this is the season for most of the world religions that celebrate their most important events. World wide there is more devotion despite what you have heard or read from the Media. Be encouraged to know that God is in control. Grow in your devotion this Christmas season. Spend more time with the Lord as you usher in His birth. Be renewed as you plan for your new year. Love your loved ones more. Reach out to others more. Share the God news with your neighbor more: That Christ has come, Christ has risen and Christ shall come again.



December 26, 2022

Monday

Gentleness and Kindness

“A soft answer turns away wrath, but harsh words stir up anger.”

– Proverbs 15:1

Regardless, of what is going on around you, you are called as a disciple to a higher calling. It is your responsibility to exhibit love, joy, kindness, gentleness wherever you are, your work and your home. Be a beacon of light where others can confide, where they can ask for your prayer support, where they can depend on you. There are too many around you that you influence. Expose them to the principles that Jesus taught. He was hung on a cross. When will you carry your cross? So be strong, be courageous and be not afraid to love in this society in which you work, live and love.

December 27, 2022

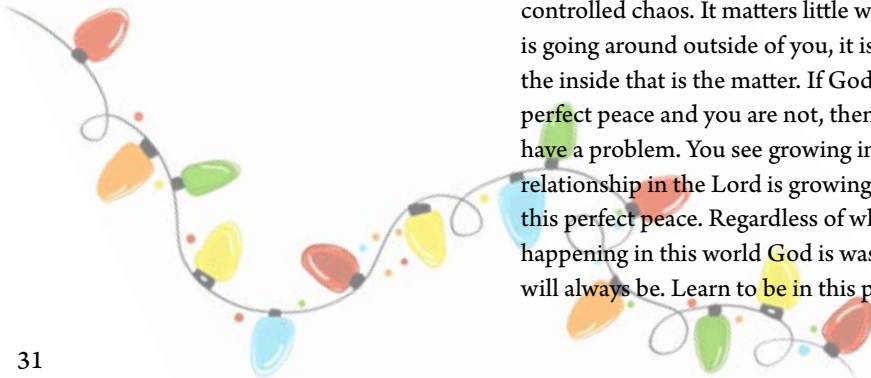
Tuesday

The Lord is with You, Go Forward

“Peace I leave with you; My peace I give you; not as the world gives peace; do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.”

– John 14:27

At times, when one is troubled there may be a tendency to blame God for the difficulty. As if somehow God is not following your plan. Let it be assured anytime all times that you are not at peace or troubled is because of dis-obedience. You have chosen not to allow the Holy Spirit to move through you. And there is a need of repentance. And just to be assured this happens again, and again, and again. The theme to you is this: Am I going around this same mountain again or am I at perfect peace about my life. Is God in control of my life or not? Am I growing in perfect peace? Ask yourself these questions about any circumstances in your life. God is perfect peace in the midst of controlled chaos. It matters little what is going around outside of you, it is the inside that is the matter. If God is perfect peace and you are not, then you have a problem. You see growing in a relationship in the Lord is growing in this perfect peace. Regardless of what is happening in this world God is and will always be. Learn to be in this peace



December 28, 2022

Wednesday

We Are Set Free

“Since we have been united with Him in His death, we will also be raised to life as he was. We know that our own sinful selves were crucified with Christ so that sin might lose its power in our lives. We are no longer slaves to sin. For when we died for Christ we were set free from the power of sin... So you also should consider yourselves to be dead to the power of sin and alive in God through Jesus Christ.”

– Romans 6:5-11

Yet we shall toil with self. Free from the power of sin we still live in the illusion that we are separated from Christ. We have yet to grow into or put on the truth that we are eternal beings made in the Divine Image, born anew through our decision to follow Jesus and now must, through our salvation walk in the presence of Christ moment to moment. But how must we dissolve self here on earth? First seek, ask and knock at the door. Your answers will come.

December 29, 2022

Thursday

Open My Heart

“Create in me Oh Lord a clean heart; renew a right spirit with in me.”

– Psalm 51:10

Every day is a new day. A day to repent and ask the Lord to renew a right spirit within me. Today you may bow down to the Lord and ask for forgiveness and seek greater ways in which to serve Him and to love Thy neighbor. Today is what you have, not to dwell on yesterday or worry of tomorrow but to serve today. What can you do to build the kingdom? But first your heart must be cleansed of iniquity. Only the Lord can do this. Therefore, ask you shall receive. Seek this and you will find and knock, and the door shall be open. For the Lord waits upon you to come close and sup with Him. Grow in this daily relationship as He has does and shall always love you.



December 30, 2022

Friday

The Lord God Our Protector

“Those that live in the shelter of the Most High will find rest in the shadow of the Almighty.... If you make the Lord your refuge, if you make the Most High your shelter, no evil will conquer you... The Lord says, ‘I will rescue those who love me. I will protect those who trust in my name. When they call on me I will answer; I will rescue them in time of trouble. I will reward them with a long life and give them my salvation.’”

– Psalm 91:1-16

Our Lord God is always with us, ever protecting us, ever making our crooked paths straight and always providing a way when we may see no way out. Yes, the nature of this drama is to overcome the separation of our God. We must first seek the Lord and learn to abandon self, to dissolve this selfnature and put on our true nature. Yield to the truth who you are and follow the example of our precious Jesus knowing that God is ever protecting us.

December 31, 2022

Saturday

Christ Likeness

“Not that I have already obtained this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that which Christ Jesus took hold of me.”

– Philippians 3:12

We continue to press into God through our relationship in Christ. Not that this is a perfected relationship that I am perfect in Christ, but that I know that I am to strive to be like Christ. In that God may use me in that striving to be as a humble servant like Christ. Christ is our Lord. Daily we move deeper in this relationship saying: “More and more of you, Oh Lord, and less and less of me.” Daily surrendering from this worldliness and tendencies that draw us away from our relationship with He that is greater than me. Not that we will ever be Christ, but that we take on Christ’s qualities of love and humility. Be thankful for this relationship.



NEW DIRECTOR OF WOMEN'S HEALING & RESTORATION

We are very excited to welcome Ashley Rowell to the Braman Foundation in the position of, Director of the Women's Ministry.

Ashley comes to us with a diverse education:
CARC (certified addiction recovery coach)
CRPA-P (Certified Recovery Peer Advocate - provisional)
CPS-Provisional (Certified Peer Specialist)
Bachelors of Science in Psychology
and currently working on her Master's degree in
Clinical Mental Health Counseling.



One of her main projects is to develop a "Day Program" for the women at the facility who either are not able to work or have a work shift other than during the day. She will be connecting with others who would be interested in volunteering alongside her to format and facilitate different sessions. Ashley has many great ideas and she looks forward to working with others that have a heart for the welfare of women and the desire to share the word of the Lord.

"My goals for this ministry are for this to become a safe space for women to find the healing and restoration that they need. I would also like for it to be a place, a safe-haven if you will, where they can learn to foster an intimate relationship with God and get to know Him in new ways."

A photograph of a garden scene featuring a central fountain with water spraying upwards. The garden is filled with various flowers, including purple and pink blooms, and green foliage. A wooden fence is visible in the background.

Woman's Ministry
VOLUNTEERS NEEDED
Be a part of the team to serve women.
Queensbury, NY | (518) 636-5930

The BFC Ministry Is Moving Forward!



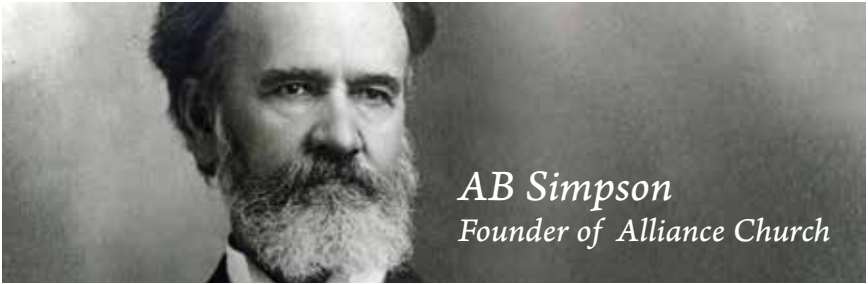
HOLY COMFORTER
ORTHODOX CHURCH

WORSHIP SERVICES

Sunday 10 AM

**18 Davies Place
Poughkeepsie, NY 12601**

A Daily Devotional



“I bring you glad tidings”

- Luke 2:10

A Christmas spirit should be a spirit of humility. Beside that beautiful object lesson of the manger, the cradle and the lowly little baby, what Christian heart can ever wish to be proud?

It is a spirit of joy. It is right that these should be glad tidings for the angel announced, Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. It is a spirit of love.

It should be the joy that comes from giving joy to others. The central fact of Christmas is the Christ who loved us and came to live among us and die for us. He or she has no right to share its joys who is living for himself or herself alone.

Love is always sacrificial, and so the Christmas spirit will call us to a glad and full surrender, first to God and then to the joyful sacrifice of what we call our own for His glory and the good of others.

The Christmas spirit is a spirit of worship. It finds the Magi at His feet with their gold and frankincense and myrrh. Let it find us there, too. The Christmas spirit is the spirit of missions. Its glad tidings are for all people.

Christmas Meditation 2

The Inner Celebration of Christmas

Free your mind; let all restless thoughts disappear from within. Make your temple of devotion a fitting sanctuary for Christ, the Infinite Baby Christ, to be born with new awakening power that you may feel His presence in your consciousness.

“O living Infinite Christ, present in the body of Jesus and us all, manifest Thyself in the trueness of Thy glory, in the sovereign power of Thy light, and in the omniscience of Thy wisdom. Out of the womb of all creation, be born in the cradle of our consciousness that we may worship Thee in truth and understanding in the all-revealing light of wisdom. O Christ, purify our consciousness that it may embrace all space and enfold the songs of birds and the symphony of the dawn spreading over the sky and hills, warming us with Thy vitality in the sunshine. O Thou the only pure reflection of God within us, manifest Thyself unto us; for Thou and we God are one. Make us realize this.

“O Christ, especially on this sacred morning, manifest Thy consciousness within us, reveal Thine omnipresence all around us, that we might understand and perceive Thee as Thou art, behind the veil of nature, and cradled within us.

“Amen.”

Many seek passing glory of material things, Those who seek the Infinite, not delaying their search until tomorrow, will reach the blissful Goal of their seeking. As I have said, it is not in the interest of a spiritual organization that we seek you. I am trying to point out to your consciousness that it is you who must seek from the eagerness of your own will. The teacher asks nothing from the disciple, lest in depending on the student the guru isn't free to offer soul-liberating disciple.

Through the portal of meditation, let your imprisoned joy escape to, and rest in, the heart of Christ, which is in everything. Let your joy dance in the farthest planets, over the vastness of the blue, and in the wavelets of souls you have met and loved, who are nearest to you. Then you will behold Christ cradled in every manifestation of creation. You will discover the omnipresent joy of Christ in all saints, in all men, in all creatures, in the star-studded cosmos, and in the cradle of your thoughts and the temple of your soul.

SPURGEON'S CORNER

“And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all: for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually.”

Job 1:5



What the patriarch did early in the morning, after the family festivities, it will be well for the believer to do for himself ere he rests tonight. Amid the cheerfulness of household gatherings it is easy to slide into sinful levities, and to forget our avowed character as Christians. It ought not to be so, but so it is, that our days of feasting are very seldom days of sanctified enjoyment, but too frequently degenerate into unhallowed mirth. There is a way of joy as pure and sanctifying as though one bathed in the rivers of Eden: holy gratitude should be quite as purifying an element as grief. Alas! for our poor hearts, that facts prove that the house of mourning is better than the house of feasting. Come, believer, in what have you sinned today? Have you been forgetful of your high calling? Have you been even as others in idle words and loose speeches? Then confess the sin, and fly to the sacrifice. The sacrifice sanctifies. The precious blood of the Lamb slain removes the guilt, and purges away the defilement of our sins of ignorance and carelessness. This is the best ending of a Christmas-day—to wash anew in the cleansing fountain. Believer, come to this sacrifice continually; if it be so good tonight, it is good every night. To live at the altar is the privilege of the royal priesthood; to them sin, great as it is, is nevertheless no cause for despair, since they draw near yet again to the sin-atonement victim, and their conscience is purged from dead works.

Gladly I close this festive day,
Grasping the altar's hallow'd horn;
My slips and faults are washed away,
The Lamb has all my trespass borne.

Grow in your Daily Walk

*All of us grow in deeper understanding with Christ
as we grow in solutions with Jesus.*

*Daily Reflections helps you grow in reflections
with a daily theme for each day.*

*Grow in understanding. Be quiet and see a
deeper relationship with Christ.*

*“Behold, I knock at your door, open
up and comesit with me.”*

Christ is asking you to be still and know I am God.



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Sign up now!

Receive our monthly Inspire email as well as a weekly update email. Visit our website and submit your email to get started.

Inspire

A Monthly E-Commerce Newsletter
by Braman Foundation of Charities

&

— The —
Mid Week Message

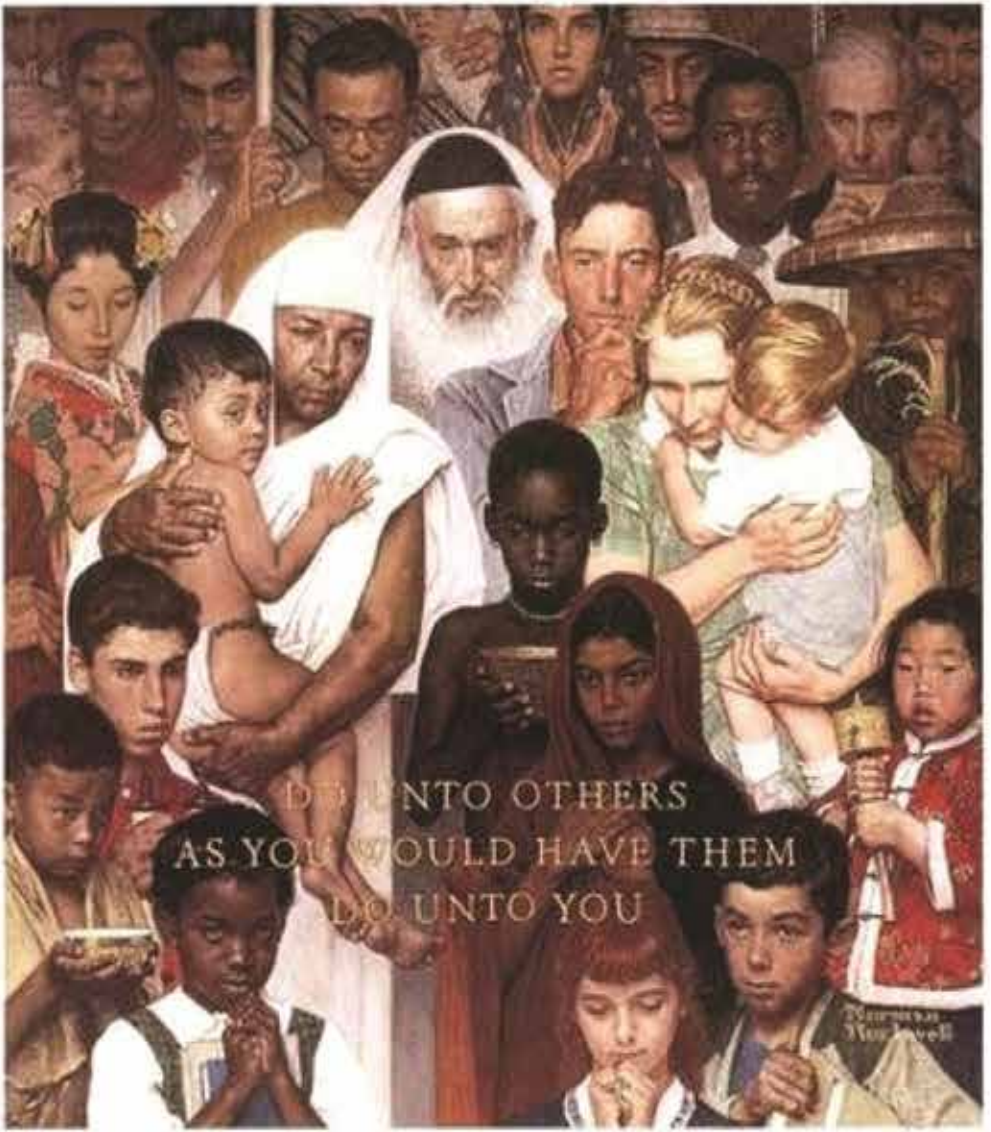
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The screenshot shows the 'Inspire' newsletter layout. At the top is the Braman Foundation of Charities logo with the tagline 'Inspire'. Below this is the 'BFC Thanksgiving Greetings' section, featuring a 'Thanksgiving' header and a quote from 1 Corinthians 13:3: 'For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you by His poverty might become rich.' This is followed by a paragraph reflecting on the meaning of Thanksgiving and the sacrifice of Christ. The 'Thankful' section includes a quote from Psalm 92:1: 'I will give thanks to you, Lord, with all my heart, with all your wonderful deeds.' The 'Thankfulness Leads to Witnessing' section quotes Philippians 4:6-7: 'Do not be anxious about anything, but in every anxiety, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving present your requests to God.' The 'An Inspirational Quotation' section features Colossians 3:17: 'And whatever you do, whether in word or in deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.' At the bottom, there are social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, and YouTube, along with a 'Sign Up Newsletter' button.

“And whatever you do in words and deeds do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks and a grateful heart to God”

Colossians 6:17



NORMAN ROCKWELL
“DO UNTO OTHERS”

Braman
Foundation of Charities