

Jesus Christ, Our One and Only Hope

We live in perilous times, and the times do not appear as though they will be improving any time soon. This is nothing new. Since the fall of mankind in Genesis 3 there have always been difficulties brought on by our spiritual adversary, Satan. Yet, regardless how hard our lives are, Christians have hope. Life without hope such as we enjoy is pure desperation.

Our hope is in Jesus Christ whom our Father in heaven raised from the dead. In Christ we have hope of eternal life. Apart from Christ we are drifting toward eternal destruction. The apostle Paul introduces his letter to Titus by reminding him that God promised eternal life long before Titus lived (Titus 1:2). The Hebrew writer concurs that it is impossible for God to lie, and states that as a result we have hope (6:18). He says in 6:19 that *“This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast.”*

What a blessing God is, and the apostle Peter wrote regarding the Christian’s hope in his first inspired epistle. Following Christ provides us with a living hope based upon the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead (1 Peter 1:3). Peter then spells out what the living hope consist of in verses 4 and 5, an *“inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last times.”* Biblical hope is a powerful weapon against the wiles of the devil. Biblical hope is not simply something we write on a wish list, and then go about our lives without expecting to one day see our hope become reality. Biblical hope is desire plus expectation. Our word hope is from the Greek *“elpis”* meaning “the looking forward to something with some reason for confidence respecting fulfillment” (BAGD 319).

We possess confidence in our hope because God has promised a lasting inheritance to the faithful. Those who endure the trials of this earthly life will be rewarded with life everlasting. Trials will come, but they only prove our faith. The outcome of faith in 1 Peter 1:9 is *“the salvation of your souls.”* We must trust God completely and rely upon Him rather than ourselves, or any other person. Our one and only hope is Jesus Christ.

This hope is not intended for our current life and times, but in the eternal life when time will be no more. When confronted with trials from within and without, always remember to keep the faith and maintain a living hope in Christ.

Terry Smalling – minister for the Tenth and Cimarron Church of Christ in La Junta, Colorado. He and his wife, Faith, moved to La Junta to begin work with the congregation in July 2011. He has also served with two congregations in Oklahoma since graduating from Bear Valley in 2000.

The Unveiled Gospel

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“The Unveiled Gospel”

Exciting times are happening in the churches of Christ in Eastern Colorado. The churches are currently striving to work together more closely in the spreading of the gospel of Christ and the encouragement of her members. With the progress made during this time we felt it necessary to begin a way of communicating with others who are interested in the Lord’s work moving forward.

Therefore, we introduce “The Unveiled Gospel.” This is not just another periodical for the church. Our goal is to inform and encourage more congregations in their walk with Christ and their work in His kingdom. We believe with better communication between the churches our work of reaching the lost and encouraging the faithful can be accomplished more vigorously.

Our staff is full of men who have devoted themselves to the work of the Lord. They are men who are willing to commit themselves to not only helping their home congregations but are willing to go the extra mile to make themselves available to help evangelize and encourage other congregations as well. Having spent the last few years with these men, I can attest to their godly character and their desire to serve the Lord with integrity. These men are:

Terry Smalling, La Junta church of Christ

Steve Sprouse, Rocky Ford church of Christ

Cub Orcutt, Trinidad church of Christ

D.J. Overman, Walsenburg church of Christ

Adam Hahn, Calhan church of Christ

Tom Wright, Limon church of Christ (also Co-editor)

Danny Aragon, Kim and Limon churches of Christ (also Co-editor)

Our plan is to have other godly men who are interested to submit an article as a guest writer. You can email articles to Tom at didymusbooks@juno.com or Danny at dapreacher238@hotmail.com.

We also would like to offer advertising for a small fee that will go towards publishing costs. We will advertise for churches who are searching for ministers, for congregational activities, etc. Thus, we are looking for individual congregations and Christians to help support this domestic mission work.

This is definitely a work in progress and we would love your prayers as we begin presenting “The Unveiled Gospel.”

- Danny Aragon, Kim church of Christ.

The staff for "The Unveiled Gospel" want to offer our services to your congregation through:

- Seminars (offered on weekends to encourage and inspire members)
- Evangelize (offered on weekdays to help seek and save the lost)

Call Tom @ 719-964-8493 or Danny @ 719-980-0587

THE CURRENT STATE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

During the past few years, various churches of Christ publications have religiously stated the undeniable truth that many congregations are in catastrophic stages of numerical and spiritual decline. While countless factors are conclusively at work contributing to this harsh reality, there is some agreement that active evangelism programs in all congregations can stop and reverse the decline. Pursuant to that goal, "all" the churches of Christ with their Christians have the Biblical responsibility of teaching the gospel of Christ (without distortion) to all people of accountability.

If the New Testament church and her Christians teach those lost persons of accountability accurately, they have done their part even if those they attempt to teach refuse or do not listen to them. But if they say nothing whatever, they and those they could have taught stand in danger of judgment (Ezek. 33.7-9; Acts 20.26-27). Accordingly, this is what evangelism programs are for. Evangelism is the process of proclaiming the gospel (good news) of Christ while an evangelist is one who does the proclaiming just as Philip and Timothy did in the Bible (Acts 21.8; 2 Tim. 4.5).

Consequently, only the Scriptures can instruct people on how to progress from practicing the unrighteous things of Satan to practicing the righteous things of God (2 Tim. 3.16-17). Thus, it is the ministerial duty of the Holy Spirit and faithful churches of Christ with their Christians to invite all individuals to thirst for God and eternal life and never for Satan and eternal death (Rev. 22.17). Therefore, when any congregations are not involved in this work, they most likely do not have any evangelism program, and are numbered among those in numerical and spiritual decline. Tom Wright (evangelist)

Tom & Carla Wright work for the Limon church of Christ, CO. Tom has also authored and published over ten theological books on various Bible topics, and is owner of Didymus Books. His children & grandchildren live in Memphis, TN. Tom & Carla visit them whenever possible.

My Best Friends

There are times when I want to avoid someone. It may be because they always complain, grumble, or say something that puts me in a bad mood. Some people want to complain about their job, their family, the economy, politics, etc. Some people are really good at sowing discord. They can walk into a room of people and leave them all with a sunken spirit. Sometimes we can get such a bad attitude that we can't see any light at the end of the tunnel. Ain't nobody got time for that. That is why we need good friends. I have some really good friends. I do mean to brag, I have the best friends.

These friends of mine are the kind of people you can't wait to see. Even when I am down they brighten my mood. They are people that share my most important interests. They go through many of the same struggles I do and even if I had something unusual they still know how to help me. They are the ones that remember my problems and ask me how things are going and find ways to help. They pray for me even when I have not asked them to due to my own pride. They have the same role models as me. They love to read the same book and sing the same songs that I do. Most importantly these friends of mine have the same goals as me. They want to go to heaven and bring as many people with them as they can.

I hope that you know my friends. There is a great chance that you yourself are one of my best friends. My best friends are the church that Jesus died for. I love to see the church, study with the church, worship with the church, pray with the church, share with the church, hope with the church, and spend time with the church. I could not imagine living without the church. We have the same Owner who purchased us with His own blood, Acts 20:28. We devote ourselves to the apostles' teachings, to fellowship with one another, to remembering Jesus' sacrifice through the Lord's Supper, and to prayer, Acts 2:42. We encourage one another to love and good deeds, Hebrews 10:24. We rejoice together dwelling on what is honorable, right, pure, lovely, of good repute, excellent, and worthy of praise, Philippians 4:4-8.

This is the church that Jesus built, Matthew 16:18. Satan does not want this church to exist. All he needs to do is sow a little discord that spreads like wild fire. Just as bad attitudes are contagious so are good attitudes. If you want to help Christ's church, then have the thoughts, hopes, and attitudes that come from being Christ's church. You need to value others above yourself and have the attitude that Jesus had, Philippians 2:3-8. You will never be a better friend to others. -Steven Sprouse

Steven is the preacher for the Rocky Ford church of Christ. He and His wife Heidi have worked with the church in Rocky Ford for 12 years. They have a daughter Hannah, 16, and a son Caleb, 13. The church meets on the Corner of Main street and Locust on Sundays from 10:00am to 2:00pm and Wednesdays at 7:00pm. See our Facebook page for special events.