

# Abide

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## Our Hearts: From The Staff



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- To challenge youth to seek the reality of God individually.
- To testify of a life that radiates the power of God.

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# You Might Be A Sadducee...

## A personal application of Scripture

By Eric M. Pazdziora

Ah, those good old Pharisees. They've been dead and gone for centuries, and yet we never tire of talking about the dangers of their beliefs. I've lost count of the number of sermons I've heard, articles I've seen, and books I've read that in some way or another caution the Christians of modern days against acting like the Pharisees of ancient days. And I suppose it's good. It's just as easy—and just as wrong—for Christians to fall into legalism, rules, and self-righteousness as it was for those sanctimonious Pharisees.

It's true that Jesus' most scathing condemnation was reserved for the hypocrisy of the Pharisees. (Anyone who suffers from a milk-and-watery conception of "Gentle Jesus, meek and mild" need only turn to His acerbic put-downs in Matthew 23 to permanently unsettle their thinking.) But the Pharisees were not the only religious sect of Jesus' day. This came to me as a mild surprise: they were not the only ones He told us to beware of imitating. I still remember my puzzlement when I stumbled across these verses: *"And Jesus said to them, 'Watch out for and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.'... Then they understood that He did not say to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees."* (Matthew 16:6, 12 NASB, emphasis mine)

The Pharisees and who? I did a little research to find out. It seems that, while the Pharisees had the biggest place in the public eye, the Sadducees, their rivals, had gotten a corner on the ministry in the temple. Furthermore, at least one insightful Bible teacher (Oswald Chambers) said that that was exactly the situation in the present-day church. The world may see the hypocrisy of

Pharisee-Christians, but inside the church, Chambers believed, we have a far greater infestation of Sadducees.

This was worth looking into a little more. Who were these Sadducees and what did they believe? What could I do to keep from becoming one of them—or was I one already? How would I know if I became a Sadducee?

The most detailed account of interaction between Jesus and the Sadducees is recorded in Matthew 22 (it is paralleled in the other synoptic gospels). The Jewish leaders were trying to trick Jesus into betraying His ignorance of theology, which, come to think about it, was rather foolish to try with the one who was both incarnate *Theos* and eternal *Logos*. Anyhow, the Sadducees make their grand entrance, as Matthew describes:

*"On that day some Sadducees (who say there is no resurrection) came to Him and questioned Him, saying, 'Teacher, Moses said, "If a man dies, having no children, his brother as next of kin shall marry his wife, and raise up an offspring to his brother.'" Now there were seven brothers with us; and the first married and died, and having no offspring left his wife to his brother; so also the second, and the third, down to the seventh. And last of all, the woman died. In the resurrection therefore whose wife of the seven shall she be? For they all had her.'" (Matthew 22:23-27 NASB)*

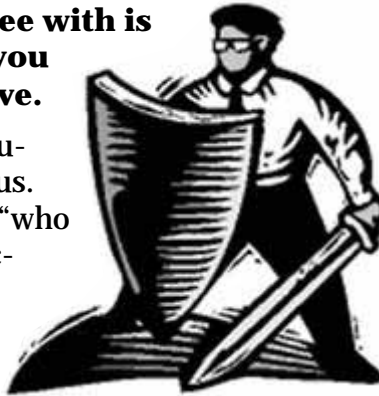
The information may not be exactly transparent. But I believe this incident, if we study it, shows us several critical characteristics of these Sadducees. And the more I found out about them, the more I realized I was looking into something that was uncomfortably like a mirror. Here are



the symptoms of the Sadducees, which (if you are brave) you may ask yourself if you share.

**...if what you disagree with is more important to you than what you believe.**

Notice how these Sadducees are introduced to us. They are from the sect “who say there is no resurrection.” So, what do they believe instead? Why aren’t they introduced, as say, “the Sadducees, who believe in the annihilation of the soul”? “The Sadducees, who believe in reincarnation”? “The Sadducees, who believe in the eternality of matter”? Somehow, their beliefs aren’t important enough to mention. We are only told what they disagree with.



It doesn’t get any better in the rest of the Bible. Acts 23:8, discussing a dissension between Pharisees and Sadducees, explains, “For the Sadducees say there is no resurrection, nor an angel, nor a spirit; but the Pharisees acknowledge them all.” Again, no trace of what the Sadducees actually believe in: we have only an exhaustive list of what they deny. All their doctrinal statement says is, “We disagree with Pharisees.”

When you ask the Sadducees to tell you what they think is true, all they can come up with is, “The truth is, they’re wrong.” You are left with a void—the spiritual equivalent of a negative number. They are eager to say what they think is wrong, but they never tell you what they think is right.

**...if you enjoy proving people wrong.**

For Sadducees, as we’ve seen, the most important part of doctrine is disagreement. But it’s not enough for them to sit back and politely beg to differ. They knew Jesus believed in the doctrine of the Resurrection, and they wanted to prove to the world He was wrong. In fact, they lived to prove people wrong.

That can be understood two ways. First, it is not so important to the Sadducees to prove *ideas* wrong, as it is to prove *people* wrong. These Sadducees were less concerned with showing the doctrine of the Resurrection to be fallacious than

they were with showing that Jesus was foolish for believing it. They used the beliefs as an excuse to attack the person.

Second, it is important to notice that proving someone else wrong is simply another way to prove that you are right. The Sadducees are on a thinly disguised ego trip. We think of pride as a desire to lift oneself up, but it can also manifest itself as a desire to put others down. If they can make Jesus look bad, they’re making themselves look good. If He is wrong to believe in the resurrection, then it must be correct to disagree with the resurrection—which just happens to be what the Sadducees themselves think. What a happy coincidence.

**It is important to notice that proving someone else wrong is simply another way to prove that you are right.**

**...if you don’t want your questions to be answered.**

It doesn’t take a very shrewd judge of character to tell that the Sadducees were not asking an honest question. They didn’t believe in the resurrection, yet they were asking about something that could only happen in the resurrection. The tall tale about the “One Bride for Seven Brothers” wasn’t something they wanted help understanding, nor was it even a teacher’s question to see if Jesus knew the correct answer. It was an impossible, ridiculous scenario designed to show the (perceived) fallacy of life after death—a clumsy attempt at *reductio ad absurdum*.

Really, the only “question” the Sadducees asked was, “How can you believe in the resurrection when it would cause you to accept an outlandish scenario like this?” That’s not a question. It’s a rhetorical device that is designed to keep an answer from being given.

So, the Sadducees don’t want to gain knowledge, or at least, they don’t want any knowledge that

might support a belief they disagree with. And you know who are the only people who refuse to ask questions: the ones who think they already know it all.

**...if you think sarcasm is spiritual.**

Not only was the Sadducees' question dishonest, it was positively dripping with sarcasm. "Whose wife shall she be in the resurrection?" they asked, but they didn't believe in the resurrection. "It's not a problem for us; it's a problem for you. Have you got an answer? We don't need one."

It's common for skeptics and unbelievers to be sarcastic and cynical. But the Sadducees thought they were serving God. By their views, Jesus was in theological error, and it was their moral duty to point out His mistake. Sarcasm was their method of doctrinal debate; this was how they defended their spiritual views.

No one, not even a Sadducee, will come out and say, "The way to really act like God is to sarcastically put down your opponents." But, deep in their inner hearts, there's something that would agree with that statement, without of course putting it in so many words. If they put it into words, they would have to contend with the Bible's unequivocal teaching that God is against all forms of mocking, scoffing, and sarcasm. "*Surely he scorneth the scorers: but he giveth grace unto the lowly.*" (Proverbs 3:34



**...if you think what happens in this world is more important than what happens in the spiritual world.**

This is the crowning hallmark of the Sadducees. As we've seen, they don't believe in a resurrection, or in angels, or in spirits. Those three things have a common thread: they all belong to the supernatural world. The only things left for Sadducees to believe are in the physical world: the things we can see, taste, and touch.

That shows itself in three ways. The first is an unwarranted reliance on common sense. Tell a Sadducee about some spiritual experience that doesn't quite add up from an earthly perspective—a sudden conversion, a healing, a vision—and you will get a king-sized dose of the scoffing

**They are concerned not with what is best but with what gets the best results.**

treatment. If it doesn't make sense to the rational mind, it can't possibly be true. How rightly did Paul say, "*A natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.*" (1 Corinthians 2:14 NASB)

The second way is a trust in what they know about. (I use this phrase instead of the word "tradition," because this symptom can be borne by people who would never consider themselves "traditional" in any other sense. But tradition it certainly is.) Sadducees say they are convinced that they know what is right; but we get a more accurate picture by slightly changing the word order. Sadducees are convinced that *what they know* is right.

The third way is a pragmatic concern with the here and now. The Sadducees are building a kingdom on this earth. They are concerned not with what is best but with what gets the best results, which results are defined as the most people in the pews, the most money in the till, the most impressive building—in short, anything that can be calculated, counted, or measured.

When someone suggests that the things that endure forever might after all be worth more attention than the things that quickly pass away, the modern-day Sadducees will squash him with a common put-down. "You're so heavenly-minded, you're no earthly good." That's not how God sees it. Listen to the soul-stabbing words of Paul's epistles: "*Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.*" (Colossians 3:1-2 NIV) Perhaps it is time for a new cliché: they're so earthly-minded, they're no heavenly good.

There are two ways you can tell if these things are true about you. The first way, obviously, is if you read about the Sadducees and said, “Good grief, that sounds just like me!” The second way, less obvious but equally reliable, is if you read about the Sadducees and said, “Aha, that sounds just like *them!*” You wouldn’t have enjoyed noticing it about them (whoever they are) if it hadn’t also been true of you.

How well did I do myself on the Sadducee test?

**I’ve seen almost all of these things in myself (at one time or another) as I looked into the mirror of God’s Word.**

Well, I’ll just hint that, if some of these descriptions seem uncommonly detailed, it might be because they’re descriptions of someone I know very well. To come out with it, I’ve seen almost all of these things in myself (at one time or another) as I looked into the mirror of God’s Word. I know from experience how uncomfortable it makes you feel when you look at the words of Jesus and realize, “I’m doing exactly what Jesus cautioned His disciples against.”

But there’s good news. If you feel guilty about being a Sadducee, that’s the first sign that you are ceasing to be one. Jesus provides the most effective antidote to this false system of thinking. Watch His response to the Sadducees carefully, as it tells not only the cause of the Sadducees’ problem, but its cure.

*“But Jesus answered and said to them, “You are mistaken, not understanding the Scriptures nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. But regarding the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God: ‘I AM THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, AND THE GOD OF ISAAC, AND THE GOD OF JACOB’? He is not the God of the dead but of the living.” (Matthew 22:29-32 NASB)*

After the tedium of the Sadducees’ endless negotiations, it is refreshing to notice how Jesus handles something He disagrees with. “You are mistaken,” He says, and goes on to tell *why* they are mistaken, and what the truth really is. But on the way, He points out the spiritual diseases that caused the Sadducees to become what they are. Jesus’ diagnosis is piercing and perceptive: the Sadducees do not understand the Scriptures or the power of God. There is more to that than you might imagine.

“You do not understand the Scriptures,” Jesus said to the Sadducees. It wasn’t that they never read their Bibles. Indeed, quite the opposite. The Pharisees and Sadducees were noted for their in-depth knowledge of the words of Scripture: “scholarly” is almost an understatement; “fanatical” is a little closer. But, for all their studies of the words, they had missed the whole point. It was as though a scholar of literature devoted his life to the study of *Hamlet* and never once noticed that Shakespeare’s play is about a despondent prince.

*“You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life,” Jesus had told them on a different occasion; “it is these that testify about Me; and you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life” (John 5:39-40 NASB).*



to testify of Jesus, and point us to Him as the one who gives us life. In the Scriptures, the Father has spoken by inspiration of the Spirit and testified concerning the Son. If we read the Scriptures and do not see Jesus in them—on every page—then we do not understand them.

*“O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!” He said again to the travelers at Emmaus. “Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.” (Luke 24:24-26 NASB)* Notice the repeated emphasis on “all”. Jesus is the subject, not only of the Gospels and Epistles, but of all the Scriptures. If I am making it my goal to understand the Scriptures, then I must make it my goal to know Jesus. The two cannot be separated. (And, of

course, it works the other way around: if your goal is to know Jesus, you had better study God's Word.)

How does this cure a Sadducee? For one thing, it shows you the truth. Not only is God's word truth (see John 17:17), but Jesus said, "I am the truth" (John 14:6). The more you learn of the truth, the more you come out of your disagreement to other people's philosophies. You do not need the sarcasm, as the truth can speak for itself. You begin to ask questions that can be answered, and to find the answers—and to realize that "Jesus is the answer" is more than an idle cliché.

What, then, of the power of God? The first step is to recognize that it exists: once you realize this, you are faced with something *bigger than yourself*, which is fatal to the self-assuredness that under girds the Sadducees' thinking. In turn, that teaches you the beginnings of humility, which takes all the fun out of proving people wrong. Then, as you see that knowing about it isn't enough, you begin to *experience* God's power—which puts an end to the anti-spiritual pragmatism. It teaches you, in fact, the only way to really be effective in working for God, and that is when God does the work with you as His instrument.

When you are a Sadducee, your spiritual life is all dust, dryness, bitterness, and jealousy—I speak from some experience. But being a converted Sadducee is one of the greatest joys in the world. You learn about forbearance, mercy, and forgiveness. You find humility; your pride fades away. You rejoice in the fact that you don't know everything, and don't need to. It is all Jesus' doing, for He is the resurrection and the life.

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## The Uncritical Temper

*"Do not judge, or you will be judged." Matt. 7:1*

Jesus says regarding judging—*Don't*. The average Christian is the most penetratingly critical individual. Criticism is a part of the ordinary faculty of man; but in the spiritual domain nothing is accomplished by criticism. The effect of criticism is a dividing up of the powers of the one criticized; the Holy Ghost is the only One in the true position to criticize, He alone is able to show what is wrong without hurting and wounding.

It is impossible to enter into communication with God when you are in a critical temper; it makes you hard and vindictive and cruel, and leaves you with the flattering unction that you are a superior person. Jesus says, "As a disciple cultivate the uncritical temper." It is not done once and for all. Beware of anything that puts you in a superior person's place.

There is no getting away from the penetration of Jesus. If I see the mote in your eye, it means I have a beam in my own. Every wrong thing I see in you, God locates in me. Every time I judge, I condemn myself. (see Romans 2:17–20)



Stop having a measuring rod for other people. There is always one fact more in every man's case about which we know nothing. The first thing God does is to give us a spiritual spring-cleaning; there is no possibility of pride left in a man after that. I have never met a man I could despair of after discerning what lies in me apart from the grace of God.

*Oswald Chambers*

*My Utmost for His Highest, June 17th*

# Interview with the Editors

## Candid Thoughts From the Heart

Josiah Rocke & Tyler Griffin



We are writing to you from school. If someone told us three years ago we would be here, "You're crazy!" would have been the answer. So much has changed in our lives, spiritually and physically, we thought we might try to share some of them with

you via interview format.

**Josiah:** "Tyler, what *is*? That is a weird question, but I'm known for that."

**Tyler:** Silence

Okay, that did not get us too far, so we will get a friend to ask questions...

**Question:** *How has your friendship changed over the last year and a half?*

**Josiah:** The first few years I knew Tyler, it was like we were working together through two masks. We were both trying to maintain this super-spiritual image. We had to use all the "proper religious terms", and we were both trying to one-up the other in how holy we were. Now, much of that is gone. When we talk about stuff, things move a lot quicker because we can be honest.

Your highly spiritual, zealous exterior gets torn off a bit, and what is revealed is not always pleasant or glorious.

**Tyler:** Frankly, it's been a bit scary. Living in the same dorm with Rocke, well, let's just say it's been interesting! When you see each other day after day, your highly spiritual zealous exterior gets torn off a bit, and what is revealed is not always pleasant or glorious. However, just as with God there is no true intimacy until you are real with Him, there is also no depth in a friendship until you come to grips with each other's reality. Our friendship has reached a new depth as we have become real with God and each other.

**Question:** *What is the most surprising thing you learned about yourself at school?*

**Josiah:** I always prided myself on being above the fear of man. No more. I have found that idea to be bravado. The real me struggles with this just as much, if not more, than everyone else. I long for affirmation from men, and do many things to seek it. I cannot say I have conquered that yet, but I am working on it. On the positive side, I found out I am not a total klutz on the basketball court. If I practice, observe, and listen, I am just a left-footed gorilla.

**Tyler:** Startling revelation: I am a failure. I don't just mean I have failed, but that outside of Christ I am a complete and total failure. A few months before I came here, I thought I had my life pretty well figured out, and I was well on my way to being the mighty man of God He had called me to be. How wrong I was. First, my plans and dreams fell apart, and then, within a few months of coming here, the entire image of who I had tried to be for so long fell to pieces. It seemed I was left with nothing. It was then I found everything.

**Question:** *One word answer: Describe the Lord as He has revealed Himself to you in the past year and a half.*

**Josiah:** Lovesick

**Tyler:** Irresistible



## My view of the church has been more accurate of a statue than of a body. .

**Question:** *How has your conception of the body of Christ changed?*

**Josiah:** I guess the biggest thing I have learned is that change in the church cannot be forced. The True Expression of Jesus Christ is something that grows in us individually and corporately. Just because I see a problem, it does not mean that I have to try to fix it.

*“Beholding...Jesus...we are changed...”*  
(2 Cor 3:18 par)

**Tyler:** I never really connected my relationship with God and with His body. I’ve come to realize they are one and the same. When I love my brother, I am loving Christ. I have learned to see a part of Christ in each member. Seeing this brings a greater unity, because the unimportant side issues are lost in simply knowing the person of Christ together. My view of the church has been more accurate of a statue than of a body. A body is spontaneous, and anytime you try to limit the body of Christ to a certain appearance or structure, you immediately kill the spontaneity and quench the life it is meant to have. Only when we see the entire body focused on Christ will we see it walking in fullness of power.

**Question:** *If you could give a word of advice to your readers— what is the best way to get to know Christ, and where is the best place to go to find it?*

**Josiah:** Wow. Well, this is going to sound crazy, but my first answer would not be the Bible. I think two ways. First, meditation, No, I am not New Age. What I mean is a deep, often wordless communion. It is something done by faith. It is not muttering, or praying scripture, it is beyond that realm. It is in the realm of Spirit, this means you can do your laundry, eat dinner, or whatever pertains to the realm of matter and still be in a place of communion with Christ. Second, the way to learn Christ is to learn His Body. No, I am not referring to church, I mean being with the Body. Maybe you never talk, maybe all you do is read the Bible, do homework, play ball, etc. but you do it together. You learn Christ, because He

is in each of them, and we are the corporate Body of Christ, representing Him perfectly.

**Tyler:** It is commonly said you can only get to know someone by spending time with him. This is true, however be careful that you are not just spending time with a book, and zealously crying out prayer needs. You see the Bible is wonderful, but it is not the person of Christ. The Bible is only fully understood through encountering and experiencing Christ Himself.

**Question:** *What is the most significant change you have seen in each other?*

**Josiah:** Tyler might disagree, but I always felt like the “leader” in our relationship. It seemed I could make him agree with me if I could just find the right approach. That is not true any more. Tyler cannot be

tricked into agreeing with something he does not know, because he doesn’t compare them to ideas he has copied from other men. Now Tyler knows God for himself, and he judges what he hears by what God has revealed to him. This means he is more open to hear things—even if they sound different, because he has learned to hear the heart behind what is said. When he encounters something he is unfamiliar with, he does not check with some manual, but admits he does not know, and seeks God on the matter.

**Tyler:** I have seen Rocke become brutally honest, as he admits what he is and what he is not. I have watched him endure some terrible times of darkness and despair, where every shred of physical and emotional comfort is torn from him, as the enemy attacks from every side. I have watched as the closest things to his heart are torn from his hands and laid on the altar of love. Finally, I have watched as Love, and only Love, has held him up. Although Rocke is still the intellectual nut he has always been, his walk with God is not. It has become simple, loving God, and loving others, which is, according to Jesus, the essence of real Christianity.

**Question:** *If Jesus were to appear and ask one thing of His church, what would it be?*

**Tyler:** A single Eye

**Josiah:** Yes, to put it simple, devotion. All the other things--ministry, love, and holiness--come from a life of beholding Jesus.

**Question:** *What has been the most difficult ex-*



*perience for you at School?*

**Josiah:** Well, I have had to make some personal decisions that have cost me a lot to be where I know God wants me. I am not talking about a physical location, but my spiritual journey. Many of my plans, dreams, and options have had to die for me to continue my pursuit of Christ. It has not been easy, but I would do it over again if I had to. Words can be so cheap, they do not express my feelings, but it has been very tough to let some things go.

**Tyler:** I am with you there, bro. Simply put, the toughest thing is letting go..



**Question:** *What are your thoughts on the cross and “brokenness” and how they relate to the believer in desiring to know Christ?*

**Josiah:** I am not sure how to express it. The cross is beautiful, but cruel. It means death. I guess the beauty of the cross is what comes after the cross--life. Brokenness is simply a means to an end. As one songwriter puts it, “in brokenness comes beauty, divine fragility.” It is simply the process whereby Christ and the believer are fused together and the life of Christ comes forth. These two are vital to the pursuit of Christ. Not as icons, or mementos, but as real, practical means by which Christ is revealed in the believer.

**Tyler:** Well, what can I add to that poetic piece of lovely literature? I should answer first so we would be more biblical, you know, the idea of Jesus’ first miracle at the wedding of Cana, saving the best for last. (Ha, ha, ha) To answer the question, they are inseparable. Jesus said he who seeks to gain his life must lose it. There is no new life without death. There is no resurrection life in Christ without a cross. Lastly, there is no beautiful fragrance, without a broken vessel.

**Question:** *What has been your most embarrassing moment at School?*

**Josiah:** When my ministry team member announced to the whole college body that I was the

best puppeteer in the world. Which I am not, and further, they only get a kick out of watching a 6’4”, 225 pound man try and manage a little puppet with a high squeaky voice.

**Tyler:** Early one morning, like hours before the rest of the world gets up, I got dressed and groggily reported to our dorm intern for snow-shoveling. He asked me what my room number was. As I was still sleepwalking, I ignorantly shook my head. I never thought about such trivial things before breakfast. I came off looking like a total idiot, but at least the fact that my brain was still numb has helped lessen the pain of the memory.

**Question:** *What are your thoughts on the coming of the Lord? Is it near, and how can we tell?*

**Josiah:** I think the spiritual coming of the Lord is just the unveiling of Christ in His Church. It is when the Church universal has been perfected in Love, and in fellowship between the Father, the Son, and the Bride. Physically, I think Christ will return shortly after this happens. AGGGH! I had to duck incoming commentaries and systematic theologies. Ok! I surrender, no more.

**Tyler:** Yes, I do believe it is near, not just because the signs are being fulfilled, but because of the sign of His Coming, the bride longing for her groom. There is an increased longing in God’s people for Christ himself, not his works, kingdom, or power, just Him. I do not think Christ is necessarily waiting for some political/social event to occur, but for His bride to be prepared and waiting for Him. All He desires is the single eye the bride in Song of Solomon had for her lover. He longs to hear the cry of His bride seeing and desiring nothing but Him. (Revelation 22:17)



**Question:** *What was the greatest desire you had coming to Mount Zion?*

**Josiah:** I think what I wrote on my application was, “I need an open door for ministry. David Wilkerson’s ministry is well-known and respected, so it will open a door for me.” Beyond that, I knew I needed to do something to equip myself, and this was the best option available.

(Tyler begins writing, then exclaims, “Oh wait, we have to be honest about this right?”)

**Tyler:** I want to say, “just to know Jesus intimately,” but... my motives really weren’t quite so pure. More than anything, I was looking at it as

## Does this bring Him glory?

preparation for ministry. To my shame, I wanted to know Jesus so I could have His anointing on MY ministry. I wanted the power of the Holy Spirit for my program.

**Question:** *What is your desire now?*

**Josiah:** I think I can honestly say, my desire is that my life would be lived to the Glory of Christ. I am learning to approach the decisions that affect my life with the mindset, “Does this bring Him glory?” I am not interested in what I get out of it anymore. I guess I can say that honestly, because it is what my hope is built on--Christ exalted.

**Tyler:** (in tears, trying not to laugh) Well, it can be best summed up in the words in Genesis, “It is not good that man should be alone.” [Numerous groans in room, followed by jokes and laughs until stomach cramps set in.] Seriously, I want to love as I am loved, and know as I am known. I want to experience the depths of Christ, not for what He can give me, or for the anointing He can give me, but for Himself. I want to know Him for Him.

**Question:** *What do these three words mean to you, “It is finished”?*

**Josiah:** Everything. I believe there is nothing in the Christian life that is not already finished in spirit. And we must remember that the realm of spirit is the realm of reality. Our current sphere of time and space is but a passing vapor. No matter how real our struggles and shortcomings seem, in God’s eyes, which is reality, they are all finished and perfected.

**Tyler:** We often attribute these words to salvation being finished, the price of sin being paid, and the way to God being opened in His Son. This is true, but they mean much more. The eternal purpose of God, formulated long before the garden, is finished. It is the second Adam



betrothed to the second Eve. Christ, and that which is made by Him, married to Him. Christ is all and in all.

*Josiah David is the visionary for this journal. He is in his second year of Bible school in Pennsylvania. He enjoys reading books and researching various topics at a voracious rate. His younger siblings love when he puts on puppet shows.*

*Tyler Griffin has been the faithful co—editor from the beginning. He is preparing to spend seven months ministering on the streets of Cork, Ireland. The oldest of 9, he lives in Hillsboro, Wisconsin.*

## A Note From The Staff

We want to express our heartfelt thanks for all the encouraging notes that we received after the last issue. It is a blessing to hear how God is using Abide to challenge and encourage the readership. We pray that it will continue to do so.

Thank you to all who have so generously donated. We are humbled by your response. The funds have been available to go to press for several months. However, due to technical difficulties and our regular printer going out of business we were delayed until now. We apologize for the long wait. It is our desire to publish issues in a timely fashion. We can only assume that our timing was not God’s timing in this instance. Thank you for your faithful continued support!

A number of submissions have been received that we will print in upcoming issues. Everyone is encouraged to submit articles, poems, and other edifying material for the benefit of the readers. May Jesus Christ be praised!!

## Excerpts

O give thanks to the Lord; For He is good;  
 For His lovingkindness is everlasting.  
 Let the redeemed of the Lord say so,  
 Whom He has redeemed  
 From the hand of the adversary  
 And gathered from the lands,  
 From the east and from the west,  
 From the north and from the south.  
 They wandered in the wilderness  
 In a desert region;  
 They did not find a way to an inhabited city.  
 They were hungry and thirsty;  
 Their soul fainted in them.  
 Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble,  
 And He delivered them out of their distresses.  
 He led them also by a straight way,  
 To go to an inhabited city.  
 Let them give thanks to the Lord  
 For His lovingkindness,  
 And for His wonders to the sons of men!  
 For He has satisfied the thirsty soul,  
 And the hungry soul he filled with what is good.  
 There were those who dwelt in darkness  
 And in the shadow of death,  
 Prisoners in misery and chains,  
 Because they had rebelled  
 Against the words of God,  
 And spurned the counsel of the Most High.  
 Therefore He humbled their heart with labor;  
 They stumbled and there was none to help.  
 Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble,  
 And He saved them out of their distresses.  
 He brought them out of darkness  
 And the shadow of death,  
 And broke their bonds apart.  
 Let them give thanks to the Lord  
 For His lovingkindness,  
 And for His wonders to the sons of men!  
 For He has shattered the gates of brass,  
 And cut the bars of iron asunder.  
 Those that go down to the sea  
 Who do business on the water.  
 They see the works of the Lord,

And His wonders in the deep.  
 from For He spoke and raised up the stormy wind,  
 P Which lifted up the waves of the sea.  
 S They rose up to the heavens,  
 A They went down to the depths  
 L Their soul melted away in their misery.  
 M They reeled and staggered like a drunken man,  
 S And were at their wits' end.  
 Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble,  
 And He brought them out of their distresses.  
 He caused the storm to be still,  
 So that the waves of the sea were hushed.  
 Then they were glad because they were quiet;  
 So He guided them to their desired haven.  
 1 Let them give thanks to the Lord  
 O For His lovingkindness,  
 And for His wonders to the sons of men!  
 7 Let them extol Him in the assembly of the people,  
 And praise Him at the seat of the elders.  
 He changes rivers into a wilderness,  
 And springs of water into a thirsty ground;  
 A fruitful land into a salt waste,  
 For the wickedness of those who dwell in it.  
 He changes a wilderness into a pool of water,  
 And a dry land into springs of water.  
 And there He makes the hungry to dwell,  
 So that they may establish an inhabited city,  
 And sow fields, and plant vineyards,  
 And gather a fruitful harvest.  
 Also He blesses them, and they multiply greatly;  
 And He does not let their cattle decrease.  
 When they are diminished and bowed down  
 Through oppression, misery, and sorrow.  
 He pours contempt upon princes,  
 And makes them wander in a pathless waste.  
 But He sets the needy securely on high  
 away from affliction,  
 And makes his families like a flock.  
 The upright shall see it and be glad;  
 But all unrighteousness shuts its mouth.  
 Who is wise? Let him give heed to these things;  
 And consider the lovingkindnesses of the Lord.

# Meditation on Psalm 107

By Rebecca Rocke

Psalm 107 was written to review the history of Israel, but it could have been written about mankind in general. The Lord has used it several times this past year to address issues in my life.



The first thing I observed was the repetition of people crying out to the Lord when they were in trouble and the Lord hearing them. He always answered and met their need. It has challenged me to examine my re-

sponses to trouble and my trust in the Lord. It is so easy for me to say “He didn’t answer *right away* so He must not hear or care.”

Is my faith in things I see or feel or is it in the Lord who has proven His character? Do I call upon God or do I give up? Do I only know or do I believe He wants me to cry out to Him? Am I desperate for the Lord to work in my life and show Himself strong? I realize that I sometimes don’t call on God until I have tried everything else or the situation is too overwhelming to handle myself. May He continue to teach me to trust in Him every moment in good or bad times.

The longer I walk with the Lord, the more I realize the awesomeness of God’s love for me. He died for me. He rose again for me. He lives in me. I cannot comprehend such love. My finite mind cannot grasp it. But more than this, He dwells in me that the power of sin may be broken and I may be free from the bonds of sin. He “*breaks my bonds apart.*” Oh, to be forever free from the sin which so easily besets me.

I think one phrase that has caught my attention is— “*And were at their wits’ end.*” This sure seems like a funny verse to have in the Bible but it rings true in my life. I wonder how often in a frustrating situation or with an annoying person I become vexed and irritable before I think to pray. I am ashamed to say how many times I become exasperated before I seek the Lord and His wisdom, patience, and guidance or deliverance.

He has never failed to bring the answer and more importantly His peace to my heart.

I think the tendency is to look at the situation rather than my God. When I see Him for who He really is, I cannot be distraught by the circumstances around me. His peace exists in the fiercest storm, if I only look at Him. The blasts of Satan’s fury, the weight of trials, and the cares of life are no match for God’s assurances of love and comfort. I need this truth to sink ever deeper in my heart and become an ever increasing reality in my life.

The last phrase I have seen replayed in my life is— “*He changes a wilderness into a pool of water.*” Some of you have been blessed beyond measure to have a body of local believers, or perhaps friends that are serious about God close by. For a long time this has not been the case for my family. While we have many godly friends, no one lives close enough to interact with on a frequent basis. Often I feel as if I am in a desert or wilderness. At times I feel like quitting.

I realized that in being alone I am learning many things about myself and where I find fulfillment. I have to come to grips with my own weaknesses and sinful tendencies. I have the opportunity to become best friends with my siblings. I have had the privilege of ministering to many different age groups. The Lord is truly turning this wilderness into springs of water as I yield to His perfect plan. May He continue His good work and He only be exalted in my life.



*Rebecca is at home serving her family. She enjoys reading, sewing and when there are not many bees flying about outside, working in her flower gardens. She teaches piano to five of her younger siblings.*

# My Heart to Yours

## Excerpts From My Journal

By John Patrick Pazdziora



When a man sets off on a long journey, he ladens himself with many provisions, tools and all manner of things, which, though they hinder his progress, make the journey more comfortable. Our Lord sent out the seventy with less than the bare minimum—indeed, with nothing

more than the clothes they were wearing.

If we are to follow Christ, if we are to serve Christ, we must be stripped down to the very essentials of faith; we must absolutely surrender, coming to a complete dependence upon Him.

Consider this verse. *“Cast your bread upon the waters, for you will find it after many days. Give a portion to seven, or even to eight, for you know not what disaster may happen on earth.”* (Ecclesiastes 11:1-2 ESV) Solomon says, in essence, “Life is at best a gamble; bet everything you have.”

We are not to trust in the rational, the predictable, and the *bona fide*. We are to look to the Glorious Uncertainty, to the Great Iconoclast. Don't get caught in the rigid pragmatism of despair; look up to the eternal irrationality of the Cross.

Is there any more revolutionary idea than this? We should tell people to base their life and actions on the words of an insignificant artisan who lived in ancient days? Does it not seem uncanny a brutal execution should give people reason to rip up the foundations of their life, turn completely around and live another way, to go

the way of sorrow and struggle and suffering, with the hope of promised glory?

Our Lord delights in confounding our common sense.

But it is not just the uncertainty; it is Who is *behind* it. We are to cast our bread upon the waters—viz., to hazard everything which would rationally provide a good life for us upon a bewildering uncertainty—*because* it will come back to us after many days. Why? God may be unpredictable, but He is not random. If you sow, you will reap; if you trust Him, He will prove faithful. It may be many days, but the bread will return.

This irony is part of the nature of the world. Consider Ecclesiastes 1. The waters flow back to the place they first flowed from, like the wind blows back to its starting point, and the sun returns to the east each morning. The entire system of the universe is founded on a great irrationality.

What, then, is the crucible that burns us to absolute surrender? Is it not merely our drawing closer to the Lord? *“For our God is a consuming fire.”* (Hebrews 12:29 ESV) We cannot draw close to Him without being burned, without being engulfed in His flames. He is perfect holiness, and, as such, demands absolute purity; therefore He refines us. It must be so. He longs to draw us unto Himself, and that very act of drawing brings us into the fire, brings us into purity.

Absolute surrender is letting Him draw. It is allowing Him to work to bring us closer to Christ, despite the pain it may cause.

When Our Lord tells us to follow Him, He also tells us He must go up to Jerusalem. A walk of

faith is a walk of suffering. If we are to follow in the footsteps of the Man of Sorrows, we cannot hope to escape sorrow; that is simply absurd.

However, Christ said, *“I am come that you might have life, and have it abundantly.”* So, does that mean Buddha was right, and life is suffering? Or the Hindus are right, and suffering is the doorway to life? Or the naturalists are right, and life is filled with meaningless suffering? To put it another way, have we been given the short end of the stick?

This is only true if we are assuming that life and suffering are one and the same. A life of suffering does not mean life *is* suffering. Perhaps what we know as life is not really life at all. Perhaps what we are really suffering is withdrawal syndrome. We have been immersed in one kind of life: human life, carnal life, life under the curse and the law. Jesus wants to give us something different, something better, a kind of life which is truly alive: His own life. He gave His life for us, and now He wants to give it to us.

*“And you were dead in your trespasses and sins.”* (Ephesians 2:1) We are hooked on this shabby carnality called the world. It is a vital part of us: of course the amputation is going to hurt. Suffering is the pain felt as the cancers are cut away. Christ draws us out of the world and draws the world out of us, drawing us all the while to Him. This is where the suffering comes from, the world and we are no longer compatible, so it rejects us and we reject it, suffering for the sake of Christ and the Gospel.

Ecclesiastes tells us we are caught in the vortex of futility, and to find true meaning in life is to accept God’s will for us, to accept our station before Him.

What then, is a man? Is man a collection of mechanical parts? Is man a little piece of God? Is

man God?

Horsefeathers.

Jesus prayed, *“not My will, but Thine be done.”* (Luke 22:24) This is the essence of manhood: to live a life totally surrendered to God, surrendered to Christ—a life so completely free of ourselves that we can become the men God intended us to be.

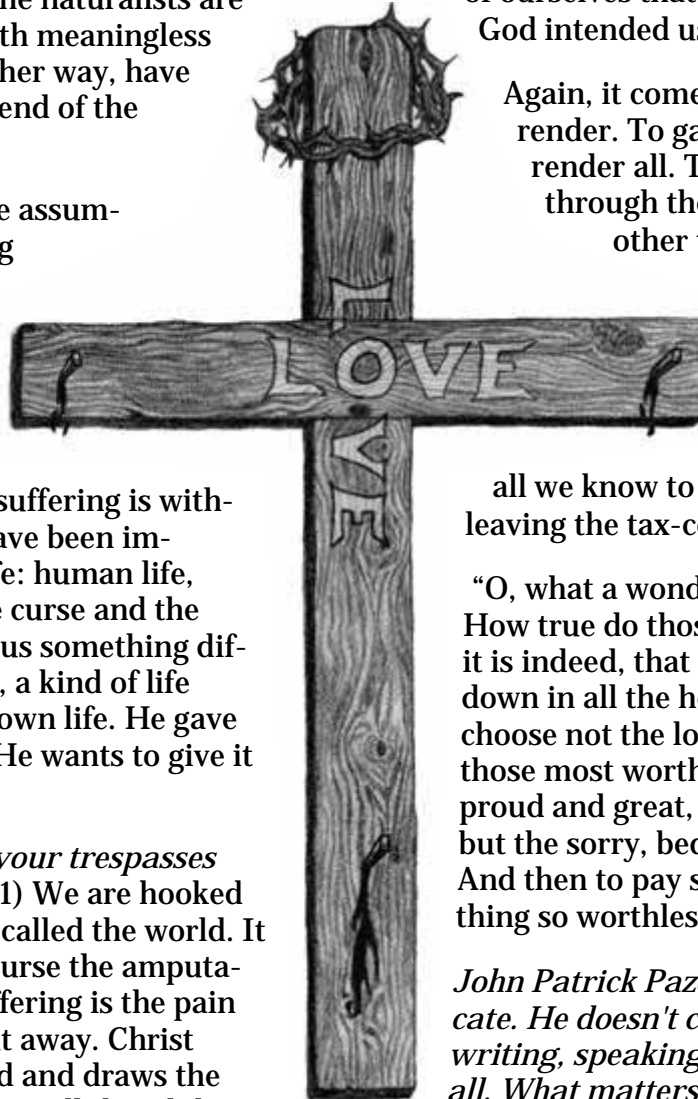
Again, it comes down to a matter of surrender. To gain anything we must surrender all. The Lord must put us through the crucible so everything other than purity is burned off.

Are we so dedicated to Our Lord that we truly would go out as he sent out the seventy? Would we truly walk away from

all we know to follow Him, like Matthew leaving the tax-collecting booth?

“O, what a wonder that Jesus loves me!” How true do those old verses ring! Wonder it is indeed, that Our Lord would look down in all the heap of creation, and choose not the lovely, not the fairest, not those most worthy, He chooses not the proud and great, not the rich and powerful, but the sorry, bedraggled rat that is myself. And then to pay so high a price, for something so worthless! What a wonder indeed!

*John Patrick Pazdziora loves to communicate. He doesn't care about the method—writing, speaking, or music, he enjoys them all. What matters to him is the message: Christ and Him Crucified. A student at the Moody Bible Institute of Chicago, he is studying to be a Bible Translator, to be equipped to communicate the message of the gospel to those who have never read it.*



# THE APPEAL TO RELIGION

By Andrew Rocke



What is the basis of our faith? Do we place our faith in our spiritual heritage? Do we place our faith in our theology? Of course, we all want to put our trust in Christ, yet often times, we find ourselves more reliant on something else. But what is that something? Is it possible that we do not truly know what Jesus is to us? I

would like to examine the story of the woman at the well in John 4, and her pathetic attempts to justify herself by her religion, with complete ignorance of true faith in God.

*“Now Jacob’s well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from His journey, sat thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour. A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, ‘Give Me a drink.’ For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. Then the woman of Samaria said to Him, ‘How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?’ For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.” (John 4:6–9)*

Let me quickly summarize what is happening. Jesus and His disciples were passing through Samaria. They stopped by a well and the disciples went to buy food in the city. While they were gone, a Samaritan woman came to draw water. Jesus was sitting near the well. He asked for a drink.

Without a doubt, the woman was surprised. She was probably wishing to get her water and get out of there as fast as possible. She probably hoped Jesus would say nothing to her. After all, He was a Jew. Jews believed the Samaritans to have a false religion (perverted Judaism), meaning they were inferior to Jews and

should be treated as pagans. The woman chides Jesus, “We’re supposed to be enemies.”

*“Jesus answered and said to her, ‘If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, ‘Give Me a drink,’ you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.” (John 4:10)*

This verse has a special attraction to me. Here is my paraphrase: “If you *only* knew the gift of God, and *Who it is* that says to you, ‘Give Me a drink,’ you would ask, and He would give you living water.” Oh, wondrous words, “*You would ask, and I would give...*”

If we could only comprehend Who Christ is and what He wants to give us! We settle for so much less. We just either do not care, or we cannot comprehend what Christ wants to be to us. We settle for religion. After all, religion can be defined by theology. It is easier to be religious than to act in blind faith, on nothing but simple promises. But, if we only knew Who makes those promises! “*You would ask, and I would give...Living Water.*” The water: “*...Will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.*” A fountain springing up! We often settle for the wells of defined theology and spiritual heritage, or pure apathy.

Perhaps we do know what Christ is to be to us. There remains a step beyond the knowledge of it. “*You would ask.*” Do we really want what Christ desires to give us? The Jews so often appealed to Abraham, their spiritual heritage. He was called a friend of God. God said He, Himself, was the God of Abraham. It was a very good, top of the line, spiritual heritage. In reality, the Jews were completely ignorant of the truth they claimed as theirs. Abraham had faith in God. He believed what God said *and* acted



on His promises. Many of the Jews in Jesus' time would do nothing more than claim their heritage.

A little later, more of the Jews' ridiculous, man-made religion, is discussed. They claimed it as theirs, yet were clueless of its true substance. As Christ said: *"If you were Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham."* (John 8:39)

Return to the Samaritan woman's response. The woman immediately assumes Jesus is referring to Judaism. She thinks Jesus is telling her something like, "You Samaritans know you are wrong. You must become followers of the Jewish religion. Judaism is the true religion, as it were, living water." She immediately defends her religion.

*"The woman said to Him, 'Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get that living water? Are You*

**However, this woman totally missed Jesus' point. She was doing exactly what the Pharisees did.**

*greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?"* (John 4:11–12)

She probably meant something like, "You Jews think you're so great. *Jacob* is our father." She said this with as much pride in her voice as the Pharisees and Jews when they say "We have Abraham as our father." (Matt. 3:9, John 8:39)

However, this woman totally missed Jesus' point. She was doing exactly what the Pharisees did. They tried to defend their "religion." What did Jesus say?

*"Jesus answered and said to her, 'Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but who-*



*ever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.' The woman said to Him, 'Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, not come here to draw.'" (John 4:13–*

*15)*

The woman is starting to understand part of what Jesus was saying. It is something that He will give her. It is not Judaism. It is Christ, not religion. However, she still does not understand what this truly means. She says, "Give me this water so I don't have to do this work anymore." (Paraphrase) Jesus' next words are to reveal her deeper need, so she will be able to understand what it is that He will give her.

*"Jesus said to her, 'Go, call your husband, and come here.' The woman answered and said, 'I have no husband.' Jesus said to her, 'You have well said, 'I have no husband,' for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly.'" (John 4:16–18)*

The woman tries to hide her sin. "I have no husband." Jesus knows about her life. He basically says, "I know all about you. You are an adulteress." The woman admits it, but quickly changes the subject. "I perceive you are a prophet. Let's debate religion." (Paraphrase)

*"The woman said to Him, 'Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. Our fathers worshipped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship.' Jesus said to her, 'Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit,*

*and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.” (John 4:19–24)*

Jesus says to her, “Stop worrying over different religions. God is not worshiped by religion, but in spirit and truth. The true worshippers of the Father do not have to worship here or there nor according to set procedures. The true worshippers of God worship in Spirit and Truth.”

The woman finally understands and says, *“I know that Messiah is coming’ (who is called Christ). ‘When He comes, He will tell us all things.’ Jesus said to her, ‘I who speak to you am He.’” (John 4:25–26)*

If we would only understand Who it is that speaks to us!

What does this passage hold for us? Let me share a few things I have learned.

First, what is it that we claim as our father? The



Jews claimed Abraham, the Samaritans claimed Jacob. They appeared to be in a deadlock. Abraham, as we all know, is called the father of all those who believe (Romans 4:11). The

Jews thought they had the Samaritans beat. Yet, the Samaritans claimed Jacob as their father. After all, God declared Himself the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. So, who was right?

We would say the Jews, and we would be right. Jesus himself told the woman that the Jews were technically right, but in reality, no one won the argument. Jesus stated this woman worshipped what she did not know, and he charged the Jews the same thing. *“You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do.” (John 8:44a)*

How could the Jews be technically right, yet so abominably wrong? Here is the key. *“Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad.” (John 8:56)* What was Jesus saying? Jesus was saying, “Yes, you are children of Abraham, but Abraham knew Who

I Am, and rejoiced to see me come, but you do not.” Abraham knew Who Jesus was, he knew that He was the fulfillment of all the promises he had staked his life on. Abraham knew Christ and what He had to give.

How is it that we so often get our theology technically right, but are left feeling empty?

What do we claim as our religion? Abraham? Paul? Our theology? Or do we claim Christ? Is God our Father? Do we worship through His Spirit and His Truth? Or do we try to worship Him with our religion?

*“God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples (or theology) made with hands. Nor is He worshipped with men’s hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things...for in Him we live and move and have our being... Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man’s devising.” (Acts 17: 25–29)*

We must stop fooling ourselves with the doctrine of Abraham. Abraham had what so many of us do not have, faith. Abraham believed God, and knew Who he had believed. He believed God would give him what He said, and Abraham received exactly what God promised because he believed. Do we really know and believe what Christ not only wants to give us, but will give us? Have we asked Him for it?

It is true, Abraham is the father of all who believe. Yet how precious few of us really believe as Abraham. We can go ahead and claim Abraham as our father. But how vain and worthless, if our faith amounts to that of the Pharisees!

If we only knew, and believed *Who it is* that speaks to us, we would ask, and He would give us the living waters of Himself.

*Andrew is studying accounting while living at home. He is compiling a hymnbook as well as writing songs. Hymn histories are his passion.*



# A Psalm Of Life

*Tell me not, in mournful numbers,  
Life is but an empty dream!—  
For the soul is dead that slumbers,  
And things are not what they seem.*

*Life is real! Life is earnest!  
And the grave is not its goal;  
Dust thou art, to dust returnest,  
Was not spoken of the soul.*

*Not enjoyment, and not sorrow,  
Is our destined end or way;  
But to act, that each tomorrow  
Find us farther than today.*

*Art is long, and Time is fleeting,  
And our hearts, though stout and brave,  
Still, like muffled drums, are beating  
Funeral marches to the grave.*

*In the world's broad field of battle,  
In the bivouac of Life,  
Be not like dumb, driven cattle!  
Be a hero in the strife.*

*Trust no Future, howe'er pleasant!  
Let the Past bury its dead!  
Act,—act in the living Present!  
Heart within, and God o'erhead.*

*Lives of great men all remind us  
We can make our lives sublime,  
And, departing, leave behind us  
Footprints on the sands of time.*

*Footprints, that perhaps another,  
Sailing o'er life's solemn main,  
A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,  
Seeing, shall take heart again.*

*Let us, then, be up and doing,  
With a heart for any fate;  
Still achieving, still pursuing,  
Learn to labor and to wait.*

*Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*

**For this reason, as we are circled by so great a cloud of witnesses, putting off every weight, and the sin into which we come so readily, let us keep on running in the way which is marked out for us, Having our eyes fixed on Jesus, the guide and end of our faith... Hebrews 12:1–2a**

*In The Next Issue...*  
**Blood & Fire: Missions**

“Not that I did already obtain,  
or have been already per-  
fected; but I pursue, if also I  
may lay hold of that for which  
also I was laid hold of by  
Christ Jesus.” Phil. 3:12

In This Issue... Our Hearts: From The Staff

**Abide**

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