



# The Tri-Cities Edifier

Volume 9

September 3, 2023

No. 36

## "I'm At Peace with My God"

Greg Gwin

It is not uncommon -- while trying to rebuke or admonish someone concerning their spiritual condition -- to have them reply with this statement: "I'm at peace with my God." Just recently we got this reply from a fella who left the Lord's church and joined a denomination. Not long ago a Christian, after admitting his homosexual lifestyle, used the same defense. Apparently these folks think that this feeling of "peace" is the absolute standard by which their conduct should be judged. They could not be more wrong!

In ancient Judah, the prophet Jeremiah bemoaned the unfaithfulness of God's people. One of the great problems was that they were oblivious to their lost condition. This was largely due to the fact that "from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely. They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace." (Jer. 6:13,14) Do you see it? They believed they were at peace with God. Their religious leaders even told them that there was peace with God. But in reality, there was no peace.

People today, like those in Jeremiah's day, are deceived into thinking that they are at peace with God even as they continue in their rebellion against Him. False teachers contribute to the problem with "good words and fair speeches that deceive the hearts of the simple." (Rom. 16:18)

The only true basis for peace with God is in humble obedience to His will. The apostle Paul urged: "Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you." (Philippians 4:9) Faith and obedience produce true peace. Anything other than that is simply the deception of subjective feelings. Think!

## Accepting God's Will

Randy Glover

As I listened to last Sunday's sermon on how fear can derail our goals, I thought of my recent heart surgery and Christ's prayer in the garden of Gethsemane. While these two situations are not identical, I can say that both the Lord and I shared a real fear of what was about to happen.

In the weeks leading up to my procedure, I worried about the risks and was concerned about Doris and our family. If something went wrong, how would they deal with me being gone? Did I do enough to take care of them financially? Until the minute they wheeled me out of the room, I found myself wondering whether I would ever hold my wife again or see my kids and grandkids.

Those were very real fears. But I also had faith in the doctor and medical staff; they had done this many times before. In spite of my fears, I was determined to move forward with the procedure for the sake of my health.

As Jesus was praying in the garden, He had very real fears about the pain and torture that lay ahead (Matt. 26:36-46). But His fears were not the same as mine. While he knew his death was part of the eternal plan, He still prayed for the cup to pass from Him. His anxiety was so strong that His sweat fell as great drops of blood (Luke 22:44).

Yet when the mobs approached, Jesus courageously stepped forward and said, "I am he" (John 18:4-8). Though He dreaded what was coming, His fear did not stop him (cf. John 12:27-28; Luke 12:50). He handled his fear differently than Peter, who drew a sword and cut off the ear of one of the mob.

The lesson: Fear is not the real problem. We often fear what never materializes. We worry about "what ifs": What if the procedure goes wrong? What if I get sick down the road?

My hope is that when we fear, we will handle it as Jesus did; that we will put our faith in God and ask, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will" (Matt. 26:39).

## Stuff About Things

Robert F. Turner

When a California church bought a building from a denomination that was moving to different quarters, they gained two new members in the process. It seems two Methodist joined the Church of Christ rather than leave the building they loved. The Methodist didn't lose any one, and the church of the Lord did not gain any one. The two were converted to the building, and they remained true to their first love.

It happens quite often with varied details. People are bound to external forms, places or other people, and these material ties are stronger by far than their convictions concerning the worship and service of God. They do not love the Lord; they like the suit He chanced to wear. We would surely be startled if we could borrow God's X-Ray and see why people maintain their various religious affiliations. Or see our own heart— One says, I put hard-earned money into this building and they are not about to run me off. Another, I was married in this building, and I'll have my funeral here. Family and social ties account for many. Some have been Church of Christ or Baptist for many generations, and consider it a sort of family obligation, at least while they are at home. When they move to another state they have no ties whatsoever.

Within a community when differences arise among brethren, such folk are left without chart or compass. It is so sad to hear people who we supposed to have scriptural convictions say, I just don't know what to do— I like people on both sides. Having never really been converted to Christ the teachings of Christ on the issues move them not. So they usually, stay with the building.

Later they may become disgusted by the antics of their brethren, but by now they have been so prejudiced against the antis or the liberals that they would cease all pretense of worship rather than change buildings.

I do not believe the situation would be measurably helped by abandoning all buildings and meeting under a tree. It is the heart that must be changed— in each individual, in each generation. Can't you just hear some old fellow say, My pappy worshipped under this oak, and I aint about to change to some modernistic fruitless mulberry.

"God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." John 4:24