

# Thus Saith God's Word

by Rev. Ted Brooks, Pastor, West Saddletree Baptist Church

## On The Wall, But Not By Ourselves

"And I sent messengers unto them saying, I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down."

"Yet they sent unto me four times after this sort; and I answered them after the same manner." (Nehemiah 6:3-4)

Once again I want to quote from II Corinthians 13:5 "Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves."

I want to say this, my friend, it does not take a great person to do great things. It only takes a consecrated person. Nehemiah did a great work for God. He did so because he was committed to the work faithfully which enabled him to be an effective witness.

When Tobiah and Sanbal-lot wanted to meet with Nehemiah in order to get him off the wall, Nehemiah sent messengers unto them saying "I cannot come down. Why should the work cease whilst I leave it." (Nehemiah 6:1-4)

I want to speak to you concerning those who have come down and in some places the work of God has ceased. As I attempt to write this sermon, I am holding a small brochure called "Wounded Heroes" and it tells about ministers who walked away from their ministries. In all, they tell us over 6,000 Southern Baptists left and 1200 were fired. 1500 ministers leave their ministries each month. Eighty percent of pastors and 84 percent of their spouses are discouraged or dealing with their depression. Forty percent of pastors and forty-seven percent of their spouses are suffering from burn-out.

Seventy percent of pastors do not have a close minister friend. So, the people who fit the above have been invited to a retreat called "Wounded Heroes Retreat" to save our missionary ministry. So, if you are discouraged, stressed out, burned out, you are invited to come and be encouraged back into the action.

Let me say this: I do not fit any of the above. No Sir, since God saved me, old things have passed away, including stress and discouragement. When the Lord saved me, I found that the same God who cared for Elijah will not pass by one of his self-sacrificing children. I found out that the God who would keep count of the number of hairs of my head will care for me and if I happen to be without pastorship, I will not hunger for want. I shall be satisfied. While it may be that the wicked are dying from hunger and pestilence, angels will shield the righteous and supply their wants to him that stays on the wall and walketh righteously. That is the promise of God. Bread shall be given him. His waters shall be sure. When the poor and needy seek water and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, "I, the Lord, will hear them. I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them." (Isaiah 33:15-16; 41:17)

Oh, my friend, it is not a retreat you need. You need to examine yourself, whether ye be in the faith. Prove yourselves. "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vine; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls. Yet shall they that fear Him rejoice in the Lord and joy in their salvation." (Habbakkak 3:17-18)

"The Lord is the keeper; the Lord is the shade upon thy right hand. The sun shall not smite thee of day, nor the moon of night. The Lord shall preserve thee from evil, He shall preserve the soul. He shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with his feathers and under his wing shalt thou trust." (Psalm 121:5-7; 91:3-10)

But, you have got to stay on the wall. This is no time to come down on a poor excuse of being burned out or to convince yourself that you have got bad nerves. No, my preacher friend, get up. Do as Nehemiah, why should the work of God cease over your self pity? Four times Nehemiah said the same thing "I can't come down." Confess that what you are doing is a great work for God. The reason most of you are discouraged and depressed and even been told you are burned out by those who travel all over this world, in and out of Israel three and four times a year. It is them who claim to have been baptized where Jesus was baptized, stood where Paul stood, they have been every where and now they are bored and become stressed out. It is these great television evangelists who are leaving their wives, those who earn millions of dollars a year and he has fallen off the wall and they are looking for company. No wonder 6000 churches closed up last year. No wonder 1500 ministers left their ministries and their spouses were depressed. And now they look around and no friends are to be found. No, my friend, it is not another tape or video package you need. No, my friend. It is time to be examined. Time to be proven. Let me ask you this question, did God call you or did you come into this ministry by the voice of another? Listen, if God called you, don't come off the wall of God. Satan has many ways of closing the doors of God's house. Satan can burn you out, stress you out, but his main line that he uses is discouragement. But none of these can get to you unless you come down off the wall yourself. Nehemiah repeated to To-biah "I am doing a good work." Let me ask you a question: what kind of work are you doing that has convinced

you that are you burned out and that your wife is so depressed? Could it be that these persons who claim to be your brothers often hinder the work of God in your life? My friend, if God had thought for a moment that you could not handle the situation He would never have allowed it to come your way.

Let me share with you how to stay on the wall. In other words, let me share with you how my wife and I overcome discouragement. First, we know that we have a conviction for the work of God. Now it is not just my kind of conviction, but we are certain that it is a Holy Ghost conviction. We know in our hearts we were drawn to God by Holy Ghost conviction. Now I admit it is a phrase seldom used today by religious persons and it is true it is seldom seen in the convert. It is one of the principles that few church folk give little or no evidence of truly being born again.

The fact is, most people who get stressed out and burned out are those who show no Holy Ghost conviction and He is not a reality in their lives. Any one who has experienced Holy Ghost conviction knows it is a work prior to conviction or before he can identify himself as a Christian. Anyone who does so before conviction has never been converted. Such a person has

never been made alive by the Holy Ghost. He only has a name while his soul dieth away and is dead to God and is a stranger to God's saving grace. No you can see why last year in these United States, 9000 churches were closed and by the year 2020 we will be hard pressed to find enough qualified pastors to pastor Christian churches.

Statisticians tell us that in the last 40 years in America, we have a 500 percent increase in violence, 400 percent increase in illegitimate births, 420 percent increase of children of single parents, a 360 percent increase in child abuse and in our cities a child is murdered every 12 minutes.

The reason for the above statistics are men who come down off the wall. The work you were doing was not great and you did not hold to the promises of God.

The second reason is that many of your are sock piling tapes of other preachers who at one time were noted as great TV personalities and you learn later they had been living a shameful life. Then when they are caught for stealing and committing adultery, they will look you in the face and say "You that are without sin cast the first stone." Let me close with this thought, there ought to be some gray-headed preachers out there who could say as Samuel "I am old and gray headed and behold my sons are with you and I have walked before you from my childhood unto this day. Behold here I am-Witness against me before the Lord and before his anointed, whose ox have I taken? Or whose ass have I taken? Or whom have I defrauded? Whom have I oppressed? Or of whose hand have I received any bribe to blind mine eyes therewith? And I will restore it you." (I Samuel 12:1-3)

Samuel's message to us all was "Fear the Lord and serve Him in truth with all your heart." (I Samuel 12:24)

When Samuel gave a call to consistent living for God, He asked the people to examine him, to try him and see if he had not lived a consecrated life. The people's reply "Thou hast not defrauded us." (Verse 4)

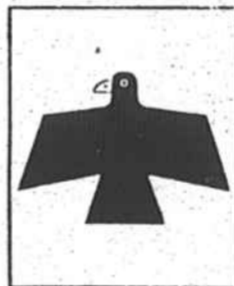
Samuel was relinquishing his political duties and handing over the governmental responsibility of the nation to the new king. While he would continue to take change of the prophetic office and to care for the spiritual welfare of the people, the king would handle the governmental responsibility. This he did so well he established schools for the training of young men in the prophetic ministry. (I Samuel 10:5-19; 18-24)

Let me say this, if we are to go forward and to remain on this wall God has placed us on, we better settle something quickly as we go into the 21st Century. Our slogan for the church better not be everybody's doing it and he that is without sin cast the first stones. These words have cost us the closing of 9000 churches and 1200 fired pastors and over 1500 left the ministry each month. Eighty percent of our preachers and wives are discouraged. Now it has been said they are burned out and stressed out and even become discouraged. Seventy percent don't even have a close friend.

Let us go forward telling what sin is, telling this America that sin is to fail God, to fail to render to God his due. Tell America God's dues are righteousness, our restitution of will. He who fails to do this will rob God of his honor. This is sin. And what is satisfaction. It is not enough simply to restore what has been taken away, but in consideration of their insult offered, more than what was taken away must be rendered back. If you and I will do this, there would be less burn out, less stressed out. Preach with fire and determination and see a new creation around us.

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# Pembroke Kiwanis

by Dr. Ken Johnson

Miss Lumbee Glenda Hadden was the speaker at the Tuesday evening meeting of the Kiwanis Club held at the Jade Garden Restaurant. She was presented by Program Chairman Furnie Lambert. She is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John and Brenda Hadden. Miss Lumbee is a first semester student at Methodist College. She wishes to major in American Indian Studies and transfer to the University of North Carolina at Pembroke. She will be attending the powwow of Nations in New Mexico this coming summer.

"I remember how greatly we as

youngsters looked forward to Christmas even counting the days on a calendar, my sister and I. We should never forget the real meaning of Christmas as it is the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ our personal savior."

Miss Glenda Hadden, Miss Lumbee, led Christmas carol singing and sang solo "Silent Nigh, Holy Nigh," in a strong, beautiful soprano voice. Presiding-President George Kenworthy. Invocation-Clay Maynor. Song leader-Ed Teets. Reporter-Ken Johnson.

The monthly business meeting was held Tuesday evening at the Jade Restaurant with President George Kenworthy presiding.

Committees for the new year are: Program Chairman: Harry Oxendine; Publicity: Ken Johnson; Inter Club: George Kenworthy; Patricia Bullard; Board of Directors: Todd Jones; Furnie Lambert; Membership: Mitchell Lowry; Buddy Bell; House Chair: Ed Teets.

New Officers are: President George Kenworthy. President Elect: Todd Jones. Secretary: Carlton Mansfield. Treasurer Albert Hunt, starting his fortieth year; President Emeriti, Brian Brooks.

Miss Glenda Hadden "Miss Lumbee" was presented \$150.00 for expenses. Furnie Lambert led the discussion for a fund raising dance to be held in the spring. Carlton Mansfield announced the Kiwanis Internal Convention will be in Denver June 18-22. Furnie Lambert invited all to be his and Elaine's guests this coming Friday at 2:00 P.M. to celebrate their 30th wedding anniversary at a "Pig-Picking cook - out in Maxton on Highway 71.

Albert Hunt reported \$3,549.16 in the Treasury.

Invocation: Albert Hunt; Song Leader: Ed Teets; Reporter: Ken Johnson

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John E. Crane, M.D. has joined the medical staff of Southeastern Regional Medical Center. He is certified by the American Board of Obstetrics and Gynecology and associated in private practice with the Lumberton Clinic of Obstetrics/Gynecology.



John E. Crane M.D.

A native of Oklahoma, Dr. Crane earned his medical degree in 1978 from the Medical College of Virginia in Richmond and completed his residency in Virginia and Pennsylvania in 1982. After five years with the U.S. Navy at Camp Lejeune, N.C., Dr. Crane began solo practice in Emporia, Virginia, where he served as the only obstetrician/gynecologist in a three-county area for most of his ten years there.

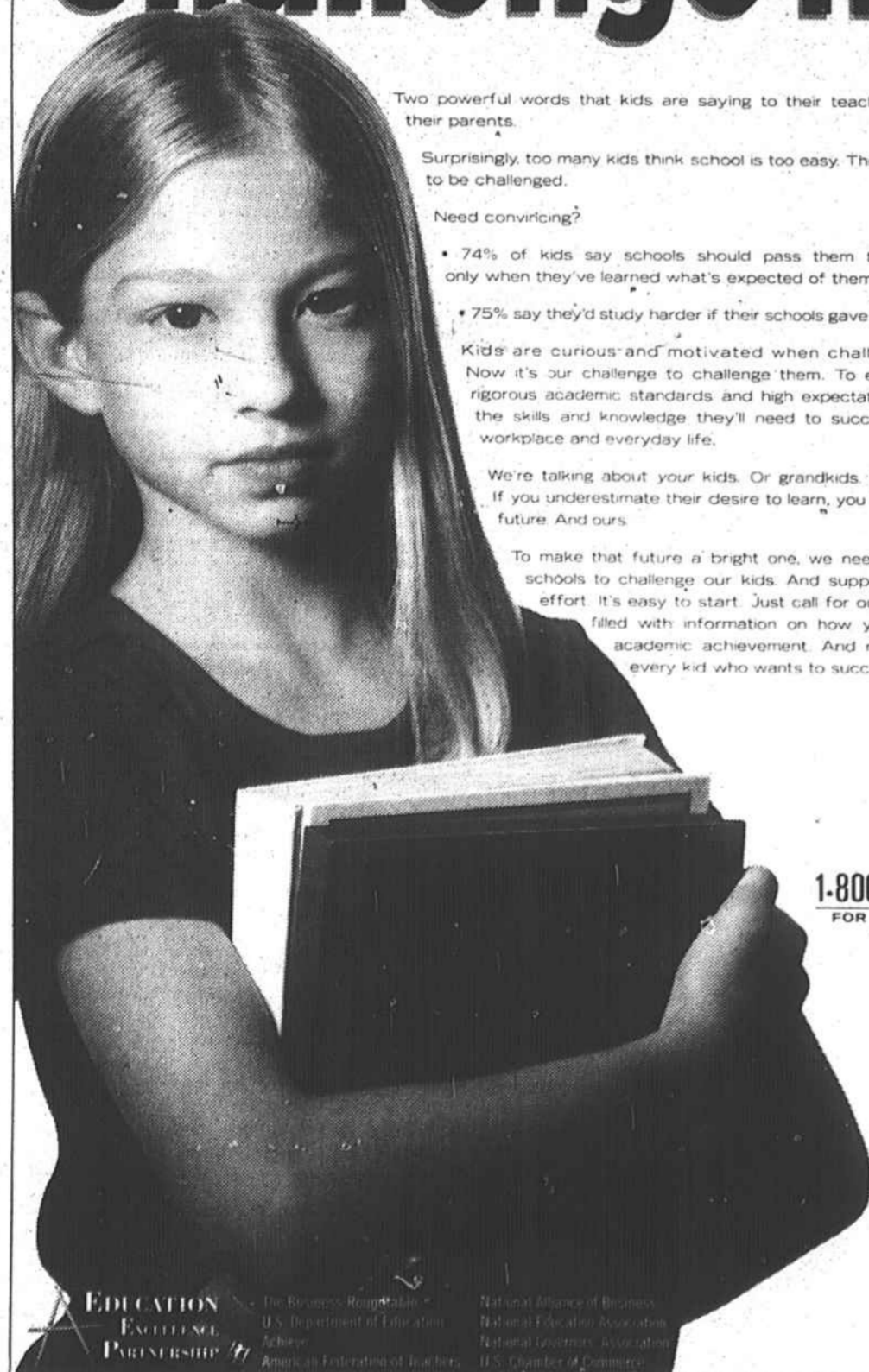
We can all feel good about each new addition to the medical staff at Southeastern Regional Medical Center. Each physician brings years of education, specialized training and personal expertise to our highly diversified health care team — and to our community.

We'd like to extend a warm welcome to our newest doctor. With his arrival, there is a significant improvement in the general health of this community.



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