

THE FUTURE OUTLOOK

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Age of Bad Health?

For many this is the age of bad health. Everyone should have a family doctor and dentist, however, many people consider the drugstore as being the doctor of all pains. There are too many people relying on pain killers for toothaches, aspirins for headaches and upset stomachs, and foot products for ailing feet. Many of these remedies relieve the pain, but many of them aggravate the pain.

There are too many people suffering from cancers, tumors, and rare diseases and illnesses today because of modern convenient medicines. Rather than making an appointment with a doctor or dentist, a person usually runs to his nearest drugstore and buys a bottle of pills. When the pain goes away as a result of the pills, the person is happy and thinks nothing else about it unless the pain returns. As a last resort the person visits the doctor to find out that he could have prevented his illness two or three months before if he had visited the doctor. Many doctors tell their patients that it is cheaper and more pleasant to prevent than to treat and cure.

Drugs used in the hands of inexperienced people such as LSD and marijuana often shorten the lives of many, most of them teenagers because of overdoses.

However, drugs are not the only reasons for bad health. Consumer products such as cigarettes, cigars, and other tobacco products are known to cause heart attacks, lung cancer, throat disorders, and other serious illnesses. Alcohol, another consumer product is known to affect the liver, kidneys, bladder and has caused the loss of many lives in car accidents.

Even overeating is dangerous to the health. Overeating is a major cause of heart attacks because food usually turns into fat which eventually surrounds the heart, overworks it, and smothers it.

Water and air pollution as a result of big industries in large cities distribute chemicals which are harmful to the body especially the eyes and nose. Bad weather, such as too much sun, usually results in heat exhaustion or sun strokes. Exposure in cold weather can cause pneumonia, flu, or tuberculosis.

Believe it or not, overworking can result in bad health. Many backaches and spinal disorders have developed from long and hard hours.

There are over a thousand illnesses and diseases; there are over a thousand reasons for them, and yet there are over a million doctors to prevent, treat, and cure them if possible.

Therefore, I say to you, as you walk or drive along the streets of the city and observe signs, let them refer to your health as well as to your driving.

CAUTION—handle each pain with care.

YIELD—to the thought that each pain may be serious.

GO—to the doctor of your choice.

STOP, LOOK, LISTEN—to what your doctor or dentist has to say, and 25 to 55 more years of good health may be added to your life.

SING WHILE YOU DRIVE

45 miles per hour—sing, "Highways are happy ways."

55 miles per hour—sing, "I'm but a stranger here, Heaven is my home."

65 miles per hour—sing, "Nearer my God to Thee."

75 miles per hour—sing, "When the roll is called up yonder, I'll be there."

85 miles per hour—sing, "Lord, I'm coming home."

DRIVE SANELY

This Week's Sunday School Lesson

NEW LIFE IN CHRIST Beginning Where You Are

For eight years Dag Hammarskjöld, a Swedish diplomat, worked in the difficult post of Secretary-General of the United Nations. He died in a plane crash in 1961 while trying to bring peace to the Congo.

Following Hammarskjöld's death a personal journal was found that revealed the sense of vocation and commitment that had guided his life. One entry read:

"I don't know Who — or what — put the question, I don't know when it was put. I don't even remember answering. But at some moment I did answer Yes to Someone — or Something — and from that hour I was certain that existence is meaningful and that, therefore, my life, in self-surrender, had a goal.

"From that moment I have known what it means 'not to look back,' and 'to take no thought for the morrow.'

"... I came to a time and place where I realized that the Way leads to a triumph which is a catastrophe, and to a catastrophe which is a triumph, that the price for committing one's life would be reproach, and that the only elevation possible to man lies in the depths of humiliation. After that, the word 'courage' lost its meaning, since nothing could be taken from me.

"As I continued along the Way, I learned, step by step, word by word, that behind every saying in the Gospels stands one man and one man's experience." Searching The Scriptures

The Scripture for this lesson is Matthew 5:1-9; Luke 19:1-10; Romans 8:1-9; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21. Selected verses are printed below.

2 Corinthians 5:17-21

17 Therefore, if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come. 18 All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation. 19 that is, God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. 20 So we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We beseech you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. 21 For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. Matthew 5:3-9

3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

4 "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

5 "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

6 "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

7 "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

8 "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

9 "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God."

Memory Selection: I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ

who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. —Galatians 2:20

Exploring The Questions

The two passages of Scripture given in this lesson mesh like question and answer. Writing to the Corinthians, Paul talks about being "in Christ" and "a new creation." Sometimes we fall into the trap of feeling good about such phrases without being able to say what they really mean. But the second passage of Scripture, the Beatitudes, makes the meaning quite clear.

Perhaps the greatest difficulty about the Beatitudes is applying them, but first they are difficult to understand. William Barclay gives significant help in his book *The Beatitudes and the Lord's Prayer for Everyman* (Harper and Row; \$5.95). Note particularly pages 20-100.

A short, readable paperback book interpreting the Sermon on the Mount is *Jochim Jeremias' The Sermon on the Mount* (Fortress Press; \$1). Also helpful would be the materials prepared for the quadrennial emphasis on studying the Sermon on the Mount. These should be readily available in your church.

The passage from Corinthians is not theological reflection dropped out of the sky but a witness to persons with whom Paul had lived and worked and fought and made up. For him, reconciliation with friends was a perfect opportunity to talk about God's reconciling work in Christ. The human situation once again provided a starting point for talking about God.

Translation is a difficult problem in verses 17 and 19 of the Corinthians passage. The English can be confusing, so we will need to give special attention here. Also receiving some consideration will be the relation of the letter to Paul's ministry in Corinth and his use of the ambassador as an example of the Christian.

Finally, through the use of cartoons depicting real-life situations, we will consider some of the problems of living the gospel in everyday life.

Finding Help

With Your Questions

Somewhere around A.D. 50 Paul went to Corinth and stayed for a year and a half or more. It was probably his largest church. From *First Corinthians*, especially, we can see that the problems Paul encountered were those raised by the secular nature of life in Corinth.

Later, while Paul was working in Ephesus, his authority was questioned by certain critics in the Corinthian church. In response Paul wrote what is often called "the severe letter," which probably included 2 Corinthians 10 through 13. Here he justified himself and his ministry. Meanwhile Paul sent Titus to Corinth.

When Titus brought news of a reconciliation, Paul wrote "the thankful letter." The Scripture in this lesson is part of that letter. In cementing this renewed friendship, Paul took the opportunity to explain further his understanding of the reconciling work of God.

God's New Creation

The correct translation of verse 17 is, "Since you are in Christ, you are a new creature." The expression "in Christ" summed up for Paul the result of man's redemption, his new state of existence. Notice that Paul was careful to trace the source of man's new condition back to God. "All this" (verse 18) can only refer to the redemptive work of Jesus Christ in transforming the lives of men.

Sentence construction in verse 19 indicates a process of reconciliation. The Revised Standard Version translation "God was in Christ" is misleading. The primary emphasis here is not the fact of the Incarnation but the activity of God in Christ. A better translation is given in a footnote in the Revised Standard Version: "In Christ God was reconciling . . ."

Verse 20 indicates Paul's conviction that God's gift always pointed to a task. It is the work of those who are "in Christ" to bring to fruition those things made possible by God's act.

Traditionally, an ambassador is both a messenger and a representative, speaking in place of the person he represents. He does not act on his own authority. It is his duty to proclaim the message entrusted to him by his sovereign. The ambassador, before acting, receives a commission. Thus, in using this figure, Paul has drawn an almost perfect analogy of the Christian's authority to speak — on behalf of Christ.

The Beatitudes

The other passage of Scripture in this lesson speaks about the conditions of the new life. These verses are, of course, from the Sermon on the Mount.

Perhaps we need first to remember what the Sermon on the Mount really is: a collection of sayings by Jesus. Each one seems to be a summary of a sermon or a teaching of Jesus. When compiled in one place, they make a real impact.

We need, too, to understand the function of the Book of Matthew, in which the Beatitudes are found. Scholars suggest that Matthew was compiled as a book of instruction for Jewish Christians. The implication is important. Here is how one scholar puts it:

"If the Sermon on the Mount is a catechism for baptismal candidates or newly baptized Christians, then it was preceded by something else. It was preceded by the proclamation of the gospel; and it was preceded by conversion, by a being overpowered by the Good News."

These teachings, then, are intended for persons who are already "in Christ." They are not laws or rules but examples of the type of radical commitment expected of Christians.

Life in the Kingdom

Now let us take a look at what is behind these pointed little sayings. In his book *The Beatitudes and the Lord's Prayer for Everyman*, William Barclay suggests some modern translations that I think bring the message of the Beatitudes to us in a powerful way.

Blessed are the poor in spirit. Barclay suggests that this be-

(Continued on Page 3)