

# Fulton County Gospel News

*Good News About Christ And His Church For All Of The World*

“... Christ is the head of the church: and He is the Savior of the body.” - Ephesians 5:23

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## “LOOK TO JESUS AND PRAY”

by Lee Moses

The above line is often sung in many congregations of the Lord's body. When Christians sing in worship, they are teaching one another (Colossians 3:16); therefore, when they sing this line, they are teaching one another to “look to Jesus and pray.” Sometimes there can be a tendency to gloss over words and phrases sung without considering the true import of their meaning (contrast with 1 Corinthians 14:15); and this particular line is one that may not be thoroughly considered as often as it should.

But what does it mean to “look to Jesus and pray”? I never had the opportunity to meet Emory S. Peck, the writer of “Sing and Be Happy,” and thus am not able to comment on what his intentions were in writing it. If his intended meaning was, “Look to Jesus and direct your prayer toward Him,” then his intended meaning was unscriptural. Jesus instructed His apostles, “*And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you*” (John 16:23). Once Christ had ascended to the Father, requests which formerly might have been made directly of Christ were now to be prayed to the Father.

While prayers are to be directed toward the Father, this by no means implies that Jesus plays an insignificant or nonexistent role in prayer. He serves an indispensable role in prayer, and deserves a place in the mind of every person who offers prayer. Thus, there is a very real sense in which Christians should “look to

Jesus and pray.”

### LOOK TO JESUS' AUTHORITY . . .

While Jesus instructed that prayer was to be directed to the Father, He also mandated that prayer was to be offered “*in my name.*” When something is done “in Jesus' name,” it is done **by His authority** (compare with Acts 4:7). Everything that a Christian does is to be done by the authority of Jesus (Colossians 3:17). It is by Jesus that each man and woman is going to be judged (2 Corinthians 5:10; 2 Timothy 4:1). And the words of Jesus, as delivered by Him and His inspired ambassadors on earth (the apostles), will be the standard of judgment (John 12:48; Romans 2:16). Therefore one must conduct his life, and his prayer, according to Jesus' teachings. Otherwise, it may be said of the one praying, “*Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts*” (James 4:3).

When we pray, we need to look to Jesus' authority. And when we do so, when can realize the great power that is behind every word we offer to the Father. Jesus confessed, “*All power (“authority,” American Standard Version) is given unto me in heaven and on earth*” (Matthew 28:18, emphasis added). What an honor it is to be able to conclude a prayer with “In Jesus' name. Amen”!

### LOOK TO JESUS' HUMANITY . . .

Although Jesus possesses all Divine authority, He came to earth as a man (John 1:14; Galatians 4:4; Philipians

2:6-7). As such He experienced heartbreak, joy, physical pain, and death. He even experienced temptation to sin (Luke 4:1-13). But as He ascended into heaven to receive His kingdom, He also received His High Priesthood. Just as priests under the Old Testament could be sympathetic to the people because of their humanity (Hebrews 5:2), Jesus is sympathetic to the wants, needs, and troubles of each of His followers – because He experienced such things.

*Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted* (Hebrews 2:17-18).

*Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need* (4:14-16).

Upon considering Jesus' sojourn on earth, one sees a great example of prayer. Jesus responded to adversity with prayer (Matthew 26:37-44; Luke 22:32; 23:34); he responded to blessings with prayer (Luke 10:21;

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Matthew 26:27). He prayed in public (John 11:41-42), He prayed with His friends (Luke 9:18), and He prayed in private (Matthew 14:23). He prayed at times when crucial decisions were to be made (Luke 6:12-13). Others sought to emulate His manner of prayer (Luke 11:1), as should we. In His humanity, He taught us how we should pray through all the experiences of our humanity.

**LOOK TO JESUS' ACCESS . . .**

It is to God the Father that the Christian brings his petitions. But who is at the right hand of the Father? *"It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us"* (Romans 8:34). Christ is present where He is always able to plead the Christian's cause to the Father. What a joy to know that *"if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous"*! (1 John 2:1). The patriarch Job in his sufferings pleaded

for a Mediator between him and God (Job 9:32-33), a plea realized in the Person of Jesus Christ: *"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus"* (1 Timothy 2:5). There is no one else by whom one can approach God.

The purpose the Old Testament priests served was as the means to approach God. But now through Christ's High Priesthood, all Christians are priests; *"an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ"* (1 Peter 2:5). It is through Christ's shed blood that one has access to the Father (Ephesians 2:13); blood which is contacted as one is Scripturally baptized (Romans 6:3), and blood continually applied as one continually abides in Christ's teachings (1 John 1:7). Each Christian indeed has reason for immeasurable gratitude to Jesus, *"In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him"* (Ephesians 3:12).

**. . . AND PRAY!**

Jesus was often to be found praying immediately before He received tremendous spiritual blessings (Luke 3:21; 9:28-29). Unfortunately, too many Christians fail to seize the spiritual blessings which are theirs for the taking. They dutifully seek to fulfill their responsibilities to the Lord and His church, and rightfully so. They eagerly anticipate their reward in heaven, but fail to receive rewards available while on earth. Prayer is not merely Christian duty; it is a tremendous Christian privilege.

Jesus said, *"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you"* (Matthew 7:7). But before the Christian is going to be given these blessings, before he is going to find them, before they are going to be opened unto him; he first needs to ask, seek, and knock. Just as Jesus serves to provide access and Advocacy to the Father, the Father

Himself desires to answer the prayers of His children (7:9-11). As the Christian looks to Jesus' authority, humanity, and access, let him not forget to pray.

**CONCLUSION**

Prayer must be offered according to the commandment of Christ, and as such is not to be directed to Him. However, we must **never** diminish the crucial role that our Savior serves in prayer. As we look to Jesus' authority, we can know that our prayers are backed by *"all power in heaven and on earth."* In Jesus' humanity, we can find a perfect ideal worthy of emulation, and yet a sympathetic ear to our imperfections. By Jesus' access, we can have our prayers rise up before the Father as an offering pleasing to Him. Let us look to Jesus' authority, humanity, and access . . . and pray!

**THAT'S YOUR OPINION!!!**

by Allen Webster

After many religious discussions with non-Christians in which the truth was carefully explained concerning the oneness of the church or the necessity of baptism, the Bible's teaching would be dismissed by saying, "Well, that's **your** opinion."

After faithful preachers have taught the Book on such matters as marriage/divorce/remarriage, social drinking, immodest dress or the necessity of attending each service, one passing by may exclaim, "Well, that's **your** opinion."

Many people are not aware of the difference between opinion and application. The Bible is a book of commands, principles and examples. It does little good for one to learn the facts of the Bible, the meaning of its words and its interesting stories unless

these find application in some way to his personal life. For example, for one to learn that “lasciviousness” means “unchaste handling of males and females” and “conduct which excites lust” would do little good unless this definition is applied to the modern evils of dancing, mixed swimming and petting.

God did not give a book that could not be understood nor does He expect each to have his own interpretation of it. Jesus said, “*And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free*” (John 8:32). To say otherwise is to make God “*the author of confusion*” (cf. 1 Corinthians 14:40). Jesus prayed for unity in doctrine (John 17:20-21), Paul commanded it (1 Corinthians 1:10-13) and the early Christians practiced it (Acts 2:42-44). We are all to “*be of the same mind*” (1 Corinthians 1:10).

There **are** matters of opinion in Christianity. These areas God has not revealed to us and are left to our good judgment. On such matters, one man’s view may be just as good as another’s. This would include how many songs to sing in a service, where to assemble, what occupation we practice, etc. Paul commands that in matters of opinion, “*Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother’s way*” (Romans 14:13).

Then there **are** matters of revelation or faith. These are things that God has spoken on and expects His followers to obey. These include direct commands, principles and approved examples. These must be accepted, believed, applied and obeyed. This would include how to become a Christian, what to do in worship, how to live the Christian life, etc.

Paul wrote, “*And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus...*” (Colossians 3:17). This means that what we practice must be by His authority. The authority to which we must appeal is the Bible.

What it says we must do and what it omits we must not do.

The problem is, many have not studied the Scriptures enough to understand the difference between matters of opinion and matters of faith. Many are like those of Hosea’s day who were “*destroyed for lack of knowledge*” (4:6). Peter wrote of those who were unlearned and unstable who “*wrested*” (from a word meaning an instrument of torture; literally, “to torture my words”) the Scriptures “*unto their own destruction*” (2 Peter 3:16). When one classifies matters of faith as opinions, he is wresting the Scriptures. Therefore, each must study the Bible regularly, carefully and sincerely.

Others have justified their worldly actions in their own minds and cannot stand for someone to apply the teachings of the Bible to their lives. The lawyer who confronted Jesus was guilty of trying “*to justify himself*” (Luke 10:29) and was seeking a loophole by which to bypass obedience. Those to whom Stephen preached had already made up their minds and thus “*stopped their ears*” (Acts 7:57). We must be careful not to try to make the Bible fit our desired lifestyle rather than making our lifestyle fit the Bible.

Each of us must be careful when we say, “Well, that’s **your** opinion,” that we are not relegating the word of God to a position subject to our own selfish desires.

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## REMEMBERING THE HOMEBOUND

by J. A. Floyd, Jr.

We are encouraged and commanded in Galatians 6:2 to “*Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.*” Then, in Philippians 2:4 we are instructed to look out for the things of others. James 1:27 defines pure religion as visiting the fatherless and widows, as well as keeping ourselves unspotted from the world.

Paul tells us that when opportunity comes we should do good to all, especially those of the household of faith (Galatians 6:10). Matthew 7:12 says, “*Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets*” – we are to treat others as we would want to be treated.

In almost every congregation we find members who, because of age and sickness, can no longer get out as they once did. They are homebound with their family, or they are confined to a nursing home. Some are widows and some are widowers.

The homebound are burdened in so many ways. They experience loneliness, and they feel they are burdens to their families. We should all respond to the needs of these people.

We can respond with a card if the homebound person is able to read. A phone call will help. From time to time a visit can be made – always with respect of the wishes of the person. A little gift often helps to lift their spirits and lets them know that they are not forgotten. Little things mean a great deal to those who are no longer very active.

Those who are young and able to go should remember those who are not. Remember them as we would want to be remembered when we reach that time of our life. Let us not forget the homebound.

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# GLOBAL BROADCASTING NETWORK POISED TO BEGIN

As longtime readers of the **Fulton County Gospel News** are aware, we generally do not use our pages to promote brotherhood works. We often receive requests to promote a number of such works, many of them excellent and worthy. But the elders of the Lord's church in Mammoth Spring, AR, who oversee the publication of **FCGN**, have determined that the precious little space that we have is to be devoted to the proclamation of the Gospel. However, once in a great while an exceptional work arises.

**Gospel Broadcasting Network** is most certainly such an exceptional work. **GBN** is "a satellite network, broadcasting the truth and nothing but the truth, 24 hours a day, seven days a week." It will be broadcast to television sets throughout the United States, and to parts of Canada and South America. Considering all the religious error that is currently being promulgated through television, the Lord's faithful saints should see the necessity of countering this error with truth. To many precious souls who otherwise never would have had the opportunity to hear the saving Gospel, **GBN** will present the opportunity to hear and be saved (compare with Romans 10:13-17).

**GBN** refers to a three-part "primary thrust" to their work:

1. To establish in viewers of all ages a strong belief in the existence of God through a heavy concentration of Christian evidences,
2. To establish in viewers the conviction that God has revealed Himself and His will to man through the Bible; and
3. To encourage the proper response to God's Word—obedience to the plan of salvation and adherence to the New Testament pattern of worship, work, and Christian living.

**GBN's** goal is to begin broadcasting September 1, 2005. We commend this good work, under the oversight of the elders at Highland church of Christ in Dalton, GA, for your prayers, encouragement, and financial support. There is a promotional DVD available, and a website that can be viewed online at [www.gbntv.org](http://www.gbntv.org). To contact **Gospel Broadcasting Network**, write **GBN**, P.O. Box 23604, Chattanooga, TN 37422. They can be reached by phone toll-free at 1-866-525-GOSPEL.

[Lee Moses]

## MARCH CONTRIBUTIONS

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### GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION

1. Hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17; Acts 16:32).
2. Believing what is taught (Mark 16:16; Hebrews 11:6).
3. Repentance (Acts 2:38; Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30).
4. Confession (Romans 10:9, 10; Acts 8:37).
5. Baptism (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; I Peter 3:21; Romans 6:3, 4).
6. After the above five steps, faithful Christian Living (I Peter 2:11, 12; Revelation 2:10).

### THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

1. The Bible is its only guide (Romans 1:16; I Thess. 2:13).
2. Wears a Biblical Name (Romans 16:16).
3. Established at the right place (Isaiah 2:2, 3; Acts 2).
4. Established at the right time (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2).
5. Established on the right person (Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:36).
6. Saved are in it (Ephesians 5:23; Acts 2:47).
7. Its members are enrolled in heaven (Hebrews 12:23).
8. Membership in it is obtained by obedience to God's commands including baptism (Acts 2:41-47; I Corinthians 12:13).

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