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JUDAS' KIN - THE THIEVES IN OUR PULPITS - *By Buddy Smith*



## **A** FAMILY, AN OCCASION, AND AN EVENT

In all Israel there was no other family quite like that of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. And in their family there was never an occasion quite like that supper at a friend's house in John 12. Lazarus, newly risen from the grave, sat as the honoured guest at the head of the table, the Lord Jesus Christ sitting at his right hand as they feasted from the dishes prepared by Martha. And at that feast there was one event that stands out above all the rest. In love and gratitude, Mary anointed the feet and head of Jesus with the ointment of spikenard from the alabaster box.

### THE FACTS ABOUT MARY'S ACT OF LOVE FOR CHRIST

*First*, it was **extravagant**, a year's salary poured out on the feet of Jesus! Not only were the spikenard and its container precious, but the method of application revealed the extravagance of her love for her Redeemer. Mary used her hair as a towel to apply the ointment to the feet of her Lord. Her hair, her glory, laid at his feet! The extravagance of that gift and the extravagance of its giving takes our breath away.

## **Heads Up!**

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## Note From the Editor



It was at Christmas time three years ago the first Heads Up! was sent out to pastors. But it really began 45 years ago when Bro. John Bunyan Wilder gave me copies of a little magazine he published, called The Pastor's Friend. I still have his articles in my files and use them in sermons often.

We recently passed 100 issues of Heads Up that have been emailed out to pastors, missionaries, evangelists and church members all over the world. Most of these are available from the [Resources Page](#) at [Grace Baptist Church](#) website.

I thank God for Bro. Hughie Seaborn (who does the layout and graphics so well), for Joye and Linet Binstead, who often write for Heads Up, for Simeon Western, Bob Kirkland, David Cloud, and Tom Hill who let me use their materials, and for a hundred more helpers who send in good material to use.

Jerry Wilhite, a dear missionary in South Africa, keeps me in my place with all his cheeky comments and jokes for the Therapy column.

Terry Gilsenan is a big help by providing space on his server for [Grace Baptist Church's](#) website.

We won't be blowing our own trumpet, so you won't be reading the encouraging comments we get from Africa, from Lithuania, from Singapore, from England, Canada, Japan, Nepal, and America, but it is good to know that some are helped by what they read here.

Thank you for the brickbats as well as the bouquets. Both are helpful!

*Buddy Smith, Editor*

**Second**, her expression of love for Christ was **fragrant**. John tells us that the house was filled with the odour of the ointment. Not only did the guests at the table, but those who came to watch and listen smelled that great sweetness. The Lord Jesus stated that God Himself took note of her gift, as though its fragrance had wafted all the way up to Heaven, and was a sweet smell in the nostrils of God. Ah, there is nothing quite like the spikenard of a loving sacrifice made for Jesus! No worldly perfume can compare to that.

**Third**, her gift to Christ was **permanent**. Mark tells us in his gospel that her actions would be remembered wherever the gospel was preached. Now, that's permanence. Mary's gift would never be forgotten. Here then is a great Biblical precept of love's sacrifices to God. What is done for Christ will last!

We should like to stop there and worship for a while. An extravagant, fragrant, permanent expression of love for Christ! Surely that is the full content of the text. But no! There is another word that must be added. It is the word, irritant. Mary's sacrifice was an **irritant**! In that blessed hour of love's sweet sacrifice, there is one harsh, discordant note. Someone was irritated by Mary's act of love for Christ. Do you hear his words of criticism?

*"Why was this waste of the ointment made? Why was not this ointment sold for 300 pence and given to the poor?"*

The words were Judas' words. Mary's love was an irritant to Judas.

Oh, how sad to read in the gospels that the disciples were immediately infected by Judas' complaint against Mary! How enlightening is the Spirit's analysis of Judas' heart and words, *"This he said...because he was a thief."*

**A thief! A thief among the disciples! One of the twelve was a thief!**

How and when his thievery began, we do not know. But we do know that, by this time, Judas was a thief. Not an occasional thief, but a perpetual thief. A subtle thief! An accomplished thief! An unsuspected thief!

It began with a covetous heart. Every coin given to the Lord to use for the poor, Judas coveted. Every drachma, every denarius, every quadrans was grist for the mill of his greedy heart. An awful lawlessness of spirit seized him whenever he came into contact with money. He could not keep his hands off it. He was a thief. He kept company with the Son of God, but he was a thief!

His story is one of the saddest in the Bible. Judas is the man who kissed the Door to Heaven and went to Hell! He came so near, but his greedy heart dragged him down to perdition.

### THE MASK HE WORE

We often read the text too quickly in our haste to be about lesser things. Did you not observe the mask, the cloak, Judas used to conceal his greed? *"Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence and given to the poor?"* At first glance we (and the disciples as well) are

fully deceived by his professed concern for the poor that thronged the streets of the land. We reason rightly when we say, "The Lord preached the gospel to the poor, and fed the hungry, and healed the lame and blind beggars on every hand!" And we say, "Did not God command us to love our neighbour as ourselves?" So we say, "Surely it is a grand thing that Judas cared for the poor and would have turned the spikenard into bread and clothing for them."

Thus we reason, and if we fail to consider the Spirit's reproof in verse 6, "This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein," we swallow the lie he told (head, hair, hoofs and all!!!!). You see, Judas implied that if it were left to him, he WOULD spend this extravagant amount on the poor, but the Spirit of God said he would do no such thing. He was a thief and cared nothing for the poor. He wanted to get his hands on that money to use it for his own ends. Already he had bought himself a homestead and in a day or so he was going to commit suicide there.

Ah, now I see the great significance of Jesus' words! *"Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me. For ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good: but me ye have not always. She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying."*

Mary, in giving her extravagant gift, was obeying the first and Great Commandment. She was loving the Lord her God with all her heart and soul and might! Judas, in his criticism, was **professing** to love his neighbour as himself, BUT HE LIED! He had no love for his neighbour, rich or poor. He loved himself supremely! And here I see a vital lesson. Let a man, any man, invert the order of the two great commandments, and upon examination, we will inevitably find a hidden agenda. Let him pretend to love his neighbour first and God last, and no matter how good it sounds, or how lofty the ideals he professes, he will be loving himself. In one of a thousand ways!

Beware of inverting the order of the Great and Second Commandments!

### Why does the Lord expose Judas' thievery?

Surely the Lord's exposure of Judas should stir in every Christian minister's heart a holy abhorrence of thievery. The Spirit's indictment of Judas should make every preacher very circumspect in his stewardship of God's money! Oh, that it were so! To the contrary, we read all too often of Judas' kin, we read of thieves in our pulpits! A minister whom we thought to be a true disciple of Christ, we later find to be of the order of Gehazi, trained by Balaam, and a follower of Judas. He strikes once and then again, and the cry goes up, "Thief, thief!" His ministry is destroyed, his family's hearts are broken, his church is divided, and the Devil gloats over his thieves in our pulpits!

In my earliest memories I saw a little church split because the pastor was caught using church funds without permission to buy himself a new fridge. Call it what you like, it was still thievery. This age old sin has spawned an awful progeny in just one generation. It is no longer a question of a few coins missing from the offering. Preachers who steal

### DEACON TRUE SEZ -



Looks like we're gonna have some record breakin' cold weather this winter. I heared t'other day that some of them politician types in DC had their hands in their own pockets. Never been that cold before.

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### LINKS IN THE MEDIA CHAIN -

- Would you like to cuddle a platypus? - <http://www.dump.com/platypussnuggles/>
- If you are not tired of snowflakes yet - <http://chaoticmind75.blogspot.com.au/2013/08/my-technique-for-snowflakes-shooting.html>
- How they broke the record for the longest flight of a paper airplane - <http://www.dump.com/paperaircraft/>
- What happens when you buy something from Amazon - <http://www.flixy.com/how-the-amazon-warehouse-works.htm>
- No sneezing at these animals! - <http://www.dump.com/tissueanimals/>
- Thinking of hiring a new secretary? - <http://www.flixy.com/the-writer-automaton-by-pierre-jaquet-droz-1774.htm>
- Our piano won't do this - <http://www.dump.com/magicalpiano/>

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are not presently facing charges of petty theft, but of grand larceny.

### JUDAS WEARS MANY DISGUISES

Sometimes his disguise is that of an evangelist (or more likely, a televangelist!) who cunningly robs the people of God to support his immoral lifestyle, sometimes his mask is that of a missionary who lives a luxurious life on the widow's mites, and sometimes it is that of a pastor who misuses church funds for selfish ends. It is all the same. In fact, not all the thieves are to be found in the pulpit. Some are in the pew. A pastor nearby told me last year of a man in his congregation who had fleeced the church of over \$40,000. Judas wears many masks.

### JUDAS HAS MANY TOOLS OF THIEVERY IN HIS BAG OF TRICKS

**Idleness** - Any preacher who receives a wage for idleness is a thief and a sluggard.

**Diversion of funds** - Any pastor who diverts missions money for other purposes is robbing Carey to pay Schuller.

**Expediency** - Any missionary who receives funds designated for a particular missions project and then uses it to buy himself some new computer gadgetry is a thief.

**Hypocrisy** - Any preacher who preaches tithing and does not practice it is robbing God.

**Covetousness** - Any preacher who gives God skim milk and keeps the cream for himself is a thief.

**Deception** - Any missionary who sells property that belongs to God and puts the money in his own pocket is a thief.

**Lies** - Any preacher who takes an offering for a missionary or an evangelist and then does not send it is a thief.

**Dishonesty** - Any preacher who does not pay his taxes is a thief.

**Abuse of the brethren** - Any preacher who uses another's skills, equipment or time without paying for them is a thief.

**Borrowing to keep** - Any preacher who borrows and does not return what was borrowed is a thief.

**Permanent furloughs** - Every once in a while I hear of a missionary who returns from his mission field and takes up a pastorate, but neglects to tell his supporting

churches so that he continues to receive support as a missionary. He is a thief.

**Unbridled greed** - Or we hear of a missionary who receives both a full salary from the church he pastors on the mission field and, at the same time, receives full support from churches in his homeland. He is a thief.

**Petting the goose that lays the golden eggs** - Almost every week I receive requests for money from national pastors in third world countries. Some of them have great needs and we would not be without compassion, but almost inevitably I find that they have learned to "pet the goose." They see pastors of churches in the western world as being "rich and increased with goods, and having need of nothing," and they would like to get in on it. Admittedly, not all national pastors have this mindset.

But some do.

What a tragic moment we have come to in church history when pastors all over the world have become drunken on the materialism of a godless society! Many preachers esteem the accumulation of earthly treasures more highly than the approval and blessing of God. Have we all forgotten the eighth commandment?

Have the ethical standards of the Christian ministry dropped so low that we have forgotten that we are to "provide things honest in the sight of all men?"

Churches and mission boards face a grievous task when they discover that their pastor or missionary is kin to Judas.

They must not cover up for them.

They must require an accounting, not just for the dollars they have stolen, but for the harm done to the Name of the Lord, and to the cause of His gospel.

At all costs, they must not be Judas' kin!

We must not be Judas' kin!

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## NOTABLE QUOTES AND QUOTABLE NOTES -

- There is Murphy's law of Time Loss In Pastoral Ministry. It says, "Every pastor who goes away for a day will find that he is a week behind when he returns. If he goes away for a week, he will be a month behind. If he goes away a month, he will be a year behind. And if he goes away for a year he has to resign his church and start over somewhere else." It is also called the law of "diminishing compound returns". ~ B. Ferraro
- Not only do all the Devil's apples have worms, but all the Devil's worms have apples. ~ anon
- Slothfulness is characterized in the book of Proverbs by sleeping in, by being a late riser.

Mark it down, the man or woman who does not rise early and seek God will never count for much. Lying in bed is a basic soft choice that sets the tone for everything else the sluggard does.

I used to wonder why my Granddad got up in the middle of the night (it seemed). Now I know it was because he was eager to get to work. As soon as it was light he was plowing and sowing and reaping.

If I had to choose between a man of modest gifts who rises early and a man of great ability who sleeps in, I would ALWAYS choose the early riser. In the long run he will win.

If I had to vote for a new pastor to fill our church's pulpit, I would want to know what time he gets up and what time he gets his family out of bed.

The daily worship of one's pillow is a great hindrance to diligent service for God. ~ Buddy Smith

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## THE WORDS GOD CHOSE TO USE - by Pastor Tom Hill



For the student of the Scriptures, there is an endless supply of great truths in the words that God chose to use in holy Scripture. It was Simon Peter that the Lord used to write the words in **1 Peter 2:21**, *"For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps."* The context of Peter's words deal with the issue of suffering as a believer. How are we as believers to deal with suffering in this sin cursed world? How are we to react when we are mistreated by the lost in light of our faith?

Peter declares that Christ has left us an **EXAMPLE**. In the first part of the verse, Peter declares that we are called to suffer. False teachers and their prosperity "gospel" declare that a Christian who suffers is out of the will of God. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Among the Scriptures that speak of our suffering, we read in **2 Timothy 3:12**, *"Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."* Peter points to Christ, Who is perfect, Who never sinned, Who is loved by the Father, and yet He suffered unjustly upon the cross of Calvary. Was He out of the will of the Father? Never at any time was He out of the will of the Father. Why did God's Servant suffer? The answer is in the next phrase of the verse – "Christ suffered **FOR US**." The little preposition "**FOR**" is that wonderful Greek word **HUPER**, which means "in behalf of" and in this case it was in **OUR** behalf. That is pointing to the fact of Jesus' being our substitute. Peter expands that truth in verses 24 and 25.

Peter then declares that He left *"us an example that we should follow in His steps."* Consider the word for **EXAMPLE**. This is from the Greek word **HUPOGRAMMOS** (pronounced – hoop-o-gram-mos). This is the only place in the Bible that this word is found. Thayer's Lexicon says that **HUPOGRAMMOS** means "1) a writing copy, including all the letters of the alphabet, given to beginners as an aid in learning to draw them; 2) an example set before one." This is a compound word, made up of the word – **HUPO** – meaning "under" and the word – **GRAPHO** – meaning "to write."

The word was used in the Greek educational system, and pointed to the manner in which boys were taught to write. There were two materials

that were used for writing upon in Simon Peter's day. One was papyrus and the other was vellum. Papyrus was the common writing material of the day. Papyrus was a paper made from the pith of the bulrush. It was not a cheap paper. The other material, vellum, was essentially a specially prepared animal skin. Neither of these were practical for boys to use in the classroom in their learning to write. Boys were taught to write using a shallow, wooden tray that was filled with wax. Each boy had a stylus that would leave an impression in the soft wax. The stylus had a sharp end for writing and the other end would be flat, so as to smooth out the wax. When the boys would write, often a sentence would be given to them that contained all the letters of the alphabet.



The master teacher would take each boy's tablet, and write words and letters at the top. He would then draw parallel lines across the wax so that the boy's letters would be straight. The boy had to copy the letters or words precisely. The line of writing was called the hupogrammos.

There was another method that some teachers used. Sometimes the teacher traced the letters in the wax and then the hand of the boy was guided in the grooves that

those letters produced. At the beginning of their learning to write the letters, the teachers often would guide the hand of the student with his own hand.

What does this have to do with what Peter said in 1 Peter 2:21? Peter is saying that just like a school boy learns to write by copying the perfect example, so must we copy the perfect pattern of life left to us by our Savior. Copying the words and letters was not an easy thing, neither is it easy to follow the example of our Savior. It is like learning to work with something like wood. At first, even following an example is difficult and frustrating. The student cannot get the wood to behave.

In the same manner, Jesus did not just give us an example and leave it at that. He is too loving to not go further. He helps us. He guides us. Remember Who He said He would send? Another Comforter – He is the One Who is called along side of us to aid us in all ways for Christ's glory. Like the master would guide the student's hand, so does the Lord see to the guiding of our lives in following in the steps of the Savior. He guides us by the Holy Spirit, by His grace and by His own help.

The last part of the verse sets forth the purpose - that ye should follow His steps. The word "that" tells us that this is the purpose clause – "in order that." In order that what? You should follow His steps. That means to "tread in His footsteps." This is that imitation of His example.

**1 John 2:6**, *"He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked."*

So may we do.

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#### REDNECK LAWMOWER - A PRESENT FOR THE WIFEY



(Admittedly, you can't push it very fast unless you add a few more hungry rabbits - Ed)

#### POLIT-BURRO - A REDNECK INSIGHT INTO DC POLITICS



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## ROME'S LONG MARCH INTO APOSTASY –

(I often hear evangelical Christians say that Roman Catholics are saved and that we who know Christ should treat them as brethren. I used to say, "I am sorry to disagree..." but I no longer say that. I just say, "I disagree with you on the basis of irrefutable evidence." Roman Catholicism, as a religious movement, has always been apostate and has steadily marched farther and farther into apostasy from its beginnings in the 3rd century after Christ until the present day. There is one question I would like these Rome-loving evangelicals, "If Rome is now so evangelical, when did it happen? I must have missed it. It wasn't in Luther's day, or in Calvin's day, or in the time of the Puritans, or in the great awakenings in England and America. It didn't happen in the Twentieth Century, and it is not happening in the 21st century. If evangelicals were wise enough and brave enough to look closely and compare Roman Catholicism with what the Lord Jesus Christ gave us as His pattern for His churches they would see that the old Harlot, the daughter of Babylon, has just changed her lipstick, raised the hem of her skirts to new levels of indecency, and learned the latest hip hop moves. BUT she is no different. If anything, she is worse than ever. - Ed)

### ROMAN CATHOLIC INVENTIONS

(Taken from Scriptural Truths for Roman Catholics by Bartholomew F. Brewer, former Roman Catholic priest).

1. Beginning of the exaltation of Mary, the term "Mother of God" first applied to her by the Council of Ephesus (A.D. 431)
2. Prayers offered to Mary, dead saints and angels (A.D. 600)
3. Celibacy of priests declared (A.D. 1079)
4. The rosary adopted from pagans by Peter the Hermit (A.D. 1090)
5. The Inquisition instituted by Council of Verona (A.D. 1184)
6. Sale of indulgences (A.D. 1190)
7. Seven sacraments, defined by Peter Lombard (12th century)
8. Transubstantiation, defined by Pope Innocent III (A.D. 1215)
9. Auricular confession of sins to a priest instead of God, instituted by Pope Innocent III (A.D. 1215)
10. Adoration of the wafer (host), decreed by Pope Honorius III (A.D. 1220)
11. Bible forbidden to laymen, placed on the index of forbidden books by the Council of Valencia (A.D. 1229)
12. Scapular invented by Simon Stock of England (A.D. 1251)
13. The cup forbidden to the laity at communion by Council of Constance (A.D. 1414)
14. Purgatory proclaimed a dogma by the Council of Florence (A.D. 1439)
15. Tradition declared of equal authority with the Bible by the Council of Trent (A.D. 1545)
16. Apocryphal books added to the Bible by the Council of Trent (A.D. 1546)
17. Immaculate Conception of Mary proclaimed by Pope Pius IX (A.D. 1854)
18. Syllabus of Errors proclaimed by Pope Pius IX and ratified by the Vatican Council; condemned freedom of religion, conscience, speech, press and scientific discoveries which are disapproved by the Roman Church; asserted the pope's temporal authority over all civil rulers (A.D. 1864)
19. Infallibility of the pope in matters of faith and morals proclaimed by the Vatican Council (A.D. 1870)
20. Assumption of Mary proclaimed by Pope Pius XI (A.D. 1950)
21. Mary proclaimed Mother of the Church by Pope Paul VI (A.D. 1965)



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### A GREAT MIRACLE -

The country around Szepingkai has a peculiar formation, somewhat resembling great ocean swells after a storm. Nestling in one of these undulations and protected from the fierce winds which sweep Manchuria from the desert reaches of Mongolia, lies the village of Taipingkow (Valley of Peace). Here Chang Shen was born, and most probably would have lived and died in that region, unknown to the outside world. Certain rumours which, in the winter of 1886, came floating in concerning a wonderful place in the city of Mukden (Shenyang), some one hundred and twenty miles to the South. It was said that the foreign doctor there could cure all kinds of diseases, even blind men were known to have gone into hospital and then returned seeing.

Blind Chang, as he was called, was then thirty six years of age. He listened with intense interest to these tales and hope gradually dawned within him, that he too might receive sight. At last his resolve was made. He would somehow make his way to Mukden.

Thus, one morning in May he set forth on his long tramp, without a guide and with only a stout stick to feel his way. The Chang clan was large and fairly well to do and so they saw to it that he was provided with a little money and warm clothes. The nights at that time of year were very cold.

All went well for the first part of the journey but when still more than a day's journey from Mukden he was suddenly set upon by robbers who took from him his little money, stripped him of his warm clothing and left him bruised and well nigh helpless by the roadside. Imagine the plight of the blind man who was now trembling with cold and rage as he pressed on in his journey. That night his only resting place was the cold brick floor of an open wayside temple. There he contracted the dread disease of the East - dysentery. How he made the rest of the way to the hospital in Mukden he himself afterwards could hardly tell.

When he arrived at the hospital gateway, too exhausted to stand, he threw himself down beside the gate as word was sent asking for him to be admitted. A message was carried back to him that the hospital was full. Not a bed was vacant. There was no room for him. When he was told this, the blind man seemed not to hear as he continued to lie at the gate. No doubt it was the Lord indeed who spoke to the hospital evangelist and caused him, at this juncture, to go out to the gate and find blind Chang. As the evangelist looked down at the cold, hungry,



suffering, and perhaps dying man, his heart was truly stirred within him. He had seen perhaps hundreds of cases as sad, some even worse than this, but never had he felt so moved, even impelled, to do what he did now. Stepping into the hospital, he went direct to Dr. Christie and begged that the man at the gate be given his own bed.

How little did either the doctor or evangelist then know what was in the balance! But the Lord knew that this blind man was to be his chosen vessel to carry the message of salvation to thousands in Manchuria. God in his own wonderful way opened what seemed an impassable door. This blind Chang entered the mission hospital where a new life for him was to begin.

For one month he remained in the hospital where relief and healing came to his suffering body, but only very partial sight to the blind eyes. At best he could but grope his way about with difficulty. Sad to say, this dim but precious sight given him in the hospital was not long after, totally and permanently destroyed by a not very skilled "Needle Pricker" doctor, such as are found everywhere in China.

The bitter disappointment Blind Chang must have felt that the failure to get back his sight was more than made up to him by the great joy he received as the story of



Redemption was unfolded to him in the hospital. He had, as you will see later, been a great sinner. The fact of forgiveness, as experienced by Blind Chang, came to a man, brutal, vulgarized, debauched and debased. But suddenly he came into touch with Jesus Christ as his Lord and Saviour and his entire life was changed forever.

Dr. Christie later wrote, "Never did we have a patient in our hospital who received the Gospel with such joy as Blind Chang. The rapidity with which he grasped the leading truths of Christianity was remarkable."

Before leaving the hospital for home, the blind man went to brother James Webster and asked for baptism. He was anxious as he said, "to get rid of his past and be cleansed from all his old ways." Mr. Webster saw that he needed further instruction, for Chang thought that being baptized by the missionary would ensure him complete cleansing. Gently but firmly the missionary made it plain that Chang must return home and show by his life the reality of his faith. Later he, Mr. Webster, would visit Chang and if he still wished to follow the Lord he could then be baptized.

Blind Chang's disappointment at this was so keen that the missionary almost repented his decision but reasoned that if the man were sincere he could only profit by the delay. So, with a few Christian books and tracts for distribution, Chang was sent on his way.

Yes, Blind Chang had a "black past." It may be that the secret of his great passion later for making Christ known to other sinners such as he had been, was that *"he loved much because he had been forgiven much."* As the Lord Jesus said of another forgiven sinner, *"Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much; but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little."* Luke 7:47

Remember reader, we are in fact great sinners. The problem is that of most of us it must be said, *"to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little."*

One would fear indeed to use the following words of the apostle Paul in describing the change wrought in this man if his life after did not fully bear out the truth of each word.

When he left the mission hospital in Mukden, he was a new creation in Christ Jesus. *"Old things had passed*

*away...all things are become new."* II Cor. 5:17. He had *"put off the old man with his deeds..."* and he had *"put on the new man."* Col. 3:9,10. In Blind Chang's own hymn given at the close of this testimony we get an indication of the inner spiritual life that had come to be his. A life of sweet fellowship with the Saviour would mark this convert. Through all the hard years of witness, the Lord Jesus Christ would be Blind Chang's faithful Guide and Companion.

But what of that "black past"? Is it necessary to give any details of it? Yes, for otherwise we could not know how great was the miracle of grace that had taken place in him.

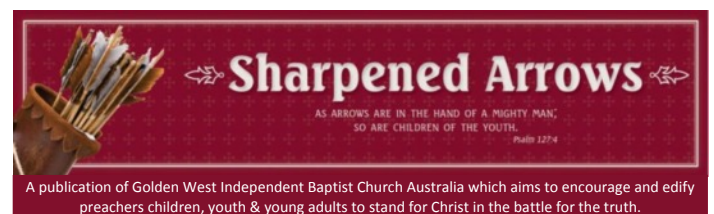
The following facts were given us by a relation of Blind Chang's, many years after his martyrdom. We were told that he bore a very bad name throughout his home region. He was an inveterate gambler and a man with such an immoral life that he had become a by-word in an area where such living was not uncommon. He made his living by acting as a sort of Official and using his self-assumed power to prey upon the people who feared him. His only child, a daughter, he turned out of home and she was forced into a life of begging and shame. Not long after he also drove his wife from home. Seventeen days after the wife had gone he became totally blind. Some said this was a judgment upon him because of his evil life, while others said it was the direct result of that life. The people spoke of him as "one without a particle of good in him."

Mankind's faith staggers at this being a Bible miracle, but what greater miracle can be recorded than such a life as this, changed, not gradually, but as quickly as the human eye can open to the light? It is the miracle of the New Birth. We have seen this miracle in evidence again and again, as slaves to sin and habit, bound in chains, as real and strong as any forged in a furnace, have had those chains snapped by the grace of God through faith in Christ that makes the person free!

We can but say, "Lord God, truly **THERE IS NOTHING TOO WONDERFUL, TOO DIFFICULT FOR THEE.**" Jeremiah 32

(To be continued in the next issue of Heads Up!)

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Two blondes went deep into the frozen Wisconsin woods searching for a Christmas tree.

After hours and hours of subzero temperatures and a few close calls with hungry wolves and a bear, one blonde turned to the other and said, "I'm chopping down the next tree I see. I don't care whether it has Christmas tree ornaments on it or not!"

Dear Santa,  
How are you? I'm good.  
Here is what I want for  
Christmas.  
A [http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B0032HFG0M/ref=59\\_hps\\_bw\\_g2l\\_in03?pf\\_rd\\_m=ATVPDKIKXODER&pf\\_rd\\_s=center-3&pf\\_rd\\_r=1XW442EH2K03Y7BMWQNM&pf\\_rd\\_t=101&pf\\_rd\\_p=1328901542&pf\\_rd\\_i=165797](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B0032HFG0M/ref=59_hps_bw_g2l_in03?pf_rd_m=ATVPDKIKXODER&pf_rd_s=center-3&pf_rd_r=1XW442EH2K03Y7BMWQNM&pf_rd_t=101&pf_rd_p=1328901542&pf_rd_i=165797)

Dear Optimist, Pessimist,  
and Realist,  
While you guys were busy  
arguing about the glass  
of water, I drank it.  
Sincerely,  
the Opportunist



My internet went down last night and I had to spend the entire evening with the family.

They seem like good people.

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**He:** My dear, what can I do to help you?

**She:** Take this bag of potatoes, peel half of them, and put them in the big pot to cook.



On December 8, 2013, we set aside the evening church service for a Sacred Concert. This was the third time GBC has done this, and it was a real blessing to the church.

Our songleader, David Onus, organized the musical program along the lines of good, godly music being played and sung by our people. We asked all those who would like to use their voices and instruments to the glory of God to let Bro. Dave know ahead of time. To their credit, they played and sang hymns and choruses that we knew.



We had about 20 items on the program, and enjoyed hearing violins, flutes, a viola, a cello, two pianos, a zither, acoustic guitars, tin whistles, and a banjo play in the different groups. Our Youth group kids sang a chorus from Friday night youth group, the men sang a special, the Grace Singers (our kids' choir which sings at the nursing home), and there were several families who sang specials as well. The concert was well attended (for a small church) with about 80 - 90 people there.

A special treat was having Kirtley Leigh, a professional concert violinist, come and play several items. She is going to be teaching several of our musicians in 2014.

The accompanying photo is mostly our own young people, along with several children from the Wong family in NSW who were here for a visit. We did not get an accurate count, but there were more than 20 instrumentalists, and possibly 30 vocalists altogether.

While we give thanks to God for the godly music we sang and heard, there was a final item that made us rejoice (with joyful laughter) when at least 11 of the McKenna's and Wong's played a piano duet together. There were at least four or five pianists on

each piano at all times and sometimes more (I lost count!!!!) We were all amazed to see them changing places, sometimes running from one piano to the other and tapping each other on the shoulder when it was time for a new pianist to take their place!

I don't know about anybody else, but it took me three days to wipe the smile off my face.

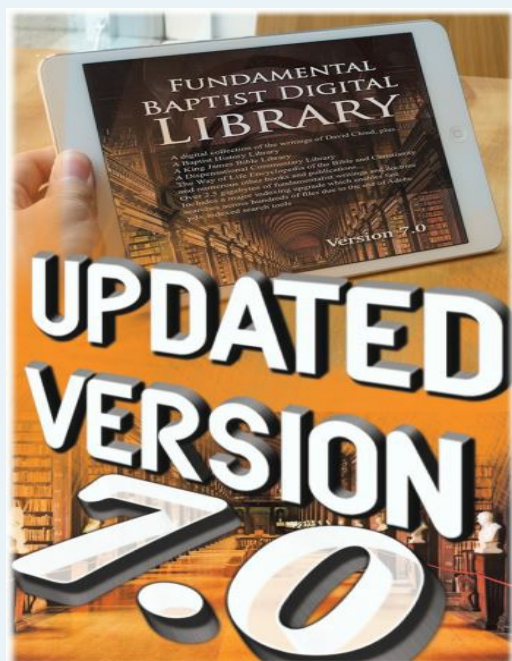
Why not organize a Sacred Concert in your church with the musicians you have?

*Pastor Buddy Smith*

PS. We make it a practice before the concert begins each time to explain that applause belongs in a setting where there are PERFORMERS and ENTERTAINERS, but we are WORSHIPPERS, offering up our praise and thanksgiving to God. So if anyone desires to express their agreement or approval, they can say, "Amen! Praise the Lord! Hallelujah, or all three" but to please not to clap. Some who attended found it hard not to applaud, and some did not know how to say "Amen." But they learned before the concert was over.

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We almost never hear anything said these days about how we should dress when we go to church. Shorts, muscle shirts, t-shirts, shirt tails hanging out like we used to see lazy louts wearing, see-through dresses, miniskirts, spaghetti strap dresses, bare feet (for grown ups!), scruffy jeans, almost anything goes. I fear we will soon see pyjamas worn to church, just in case the sermon is boring and the wearer decides to catch up on the sleep they missed on Saturday night when the teens had an all night movie blitz!

Most preachers are running scared, and get the shakes whenever God speaks to them about the need for sermons on certain topics, like the way Christians dress.

I have a theory that you can tell how secure a pastor is in his church by whether he is courageous enough to preach on these C4 topics. (If you don't know what C4 is, ask your teens.) C4 topics are those explosive subjects that tend to blow pastors clean out of their pulpits. Subjects like Giving, Witnessing To The Lost, Missions, Church Attendance, How You Raise Your Kids, Rock Music, Fasting and Prayer, Why Christians Should Avoid Hollywood Like the Plague, Total Abstinence From Alcohol, Gambling, TV, Addiction To Social Media, Separation In All Its Forms, Why Holiness is Not Legalism, etc. But the most divisive subject of all is probably How Christians Should Dress When They Come to Church.

If pastors want to save money on airconditioning the church during the summer, just let them preach a 3 month long series on Christian Standards of Dress and the temperature will drop by at least twenty five degrees the first Sunday and stay there till Christmas.

#### DOES IT MATTER TO GOD HOW WE DRESS? -

It would do us good to read everything God says in the Holy Scriptures on Dress. Like these passages:

1. That point out the difference between fallen man's and God's standards for Dress:
  - **Genesis 3:7** *And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.*
  - **Genesis 3:21** *Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.*
2. That tell us that a harlot's immorality is seen in the way she dresses and behaves:



- **Proverbs 7:6-10** *For at the window of my house I looked through my casement, And beheld among the simple ones, I discerned among the youths, a young man void of understanding, Passing through the street near her corner; and he went the way to her house, In the twilight, in the evening, in the black and dark night: And, behold, there met him a woman with the attire of an harlot, and subtil of heart.*
- 3. That reveal that a nation's apostasy is displayed in its women's styles of clothing, hair, and jewelry(!!!!!!!!!!!):
  - **Isaiah 3:8, 16-24** *For Jerusalem is ruined, and Judah is fallen: because their tongue and their doings are against the LORD, to provoke the eyes of his glory. Moreover the LORD saith, Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet: Therefore the Lord will smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and the LORD will discover their secret parts. In that day the Lord will take away the bravery of their tinkling ornaments about their feet, and their cauls, and their round tires like the moon, The chains, and the bracelets, and the mufflers, The bonnets, and the ornaments of the legs, and the headbands, and the tablets, and the earrings, The rings, and nose jewels, The changeable suits of apparel, and*

*the mantles, and the wimples, and the crisping pins, The glasses, and the fine linen, and the hoods, and the vails. And it shall come to pass, that instead of sweet smell there shall be stink; and instead of a girdle a rent; and instead of well set hair baldness; and instead of a stomacher a girding of sackcloth; and burning instead of beauty.*

4. That teach that God would have us know that making bare the leg, and uncovering the thigh is nakedness in His sight:

- **Isaiah 47:2-3** *Take the millstones, and grind meal: uncover thy locks, make bare the leg, uncover the thigh, pass over the rivers. Thy nakedness shall be uncovered, yea, thy shame shall be seen: I will take vengeance, and I will not meet thee as a man.*

5. That set the standard, not in stylishness, but in modesty:

- **1 Timothy 2:9** *In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array;*

#### **BUT WHAT ABOUT THE WAY MEN DRESS?**

Most of what *is* said by preachers on the subject of Christian Dress is said about women's clothing. Why is this?

1. Because most of what is written in Holy Scripture about clothing addresses women's dress. It is quite clear that women are MUCH more interested in the way they look than men are. Admittedly, men nowadays show more interest in being fashionable than they used to. I remember when my dad came home from WWII with his khaki uniforms, he took the patches off them and wore them to work, wore them at home, and wore them to church. The earliest photos of our family show my dad dressed in khaki. That's all he had and it didn't worry him at all. Fashion simply wasn't important for men 65 years ago, or not the men we knew. If it was clean and modest, it was in style. I still hold to that approach.
2. The impact of Fashion Designers on the styles worn by Christian women today is amazing! Hemlines, necklines, tightness, sheerness, colour, and cut are mostly determined, not by dress standards derived from Holy Scripture, but from clothing designs worn by the immodest supermodels who strut and prowl the catwalks at Fashion Shows. And since IMAGE (not godly modesty) became the driving agenda for

Christian women, many Sunday morning church services are often slightly sanitized versions of the world's catwalks.

So what about men's styles? At present, where I pastor, our men have adopted the casual look. Ties and shirttails are OUT. (My mother cured me of leaving my shirttail out by threatening to sew lace on it so everybody would think I was a pansy. I never did it again.) Shoes are mostly left unshined, and jeans are all the go. The congregation is largely composed of casual men, dressy ladies, and scruffy kids.

Is it important how men dress when they go to church? I believe it is. We men are to be leaders, trailblazers for our families. We are to set the standard. When we are too casual in our dress, we unknowingly send signals to our wives, to our children, and to those who know nothing of God. The "sermon of slouch" is an eloquent oration on carnal slothfulness and our wives, daughters, and sons are listening closely. If we dads let the flesh have its way in OUR sloppy dress, then we must not be surprised if our wives follow our lead and "dress to kill," our daughters mimic Britney and Gaga, and our sons copy Snoop Dog's latest outfit. Our carelessness in dress preaches to them that the worship of God is not something we need to be serious about. In most churches we fathers are so "laid back", we are so "fearless" in our worship of God, we are so lacking in reverence that it bothers us not at all to slouch into the house of God late and looking like a "mob of swaggies on holiday" (for you non-aussies, a swaggie is a tramp, a bum.)

***I wonder if God's people dress better to go a wedding than they do when they go to worship their Saviour? Does that tell us how highly we esteem the object of our affections?***

If the fear of God ever falls upon us again, if an Awakening is sent from Heaven, if God visits His people in Divine Intervention, our hearts and mouths will be hushed with a godly fear so that all the trivial yabbering will die away, and we will begin to dress in a manner befitting our audience with the King of Kings.

***And we will see that style was simply the subtle scheme of Satan to keep the sense of sight in a state of shock.***

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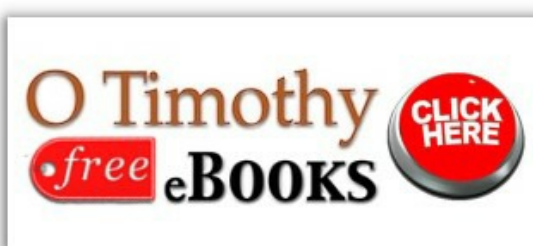
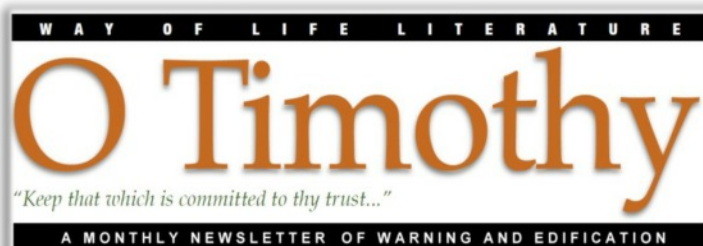


# Lifting Up The STANDARD

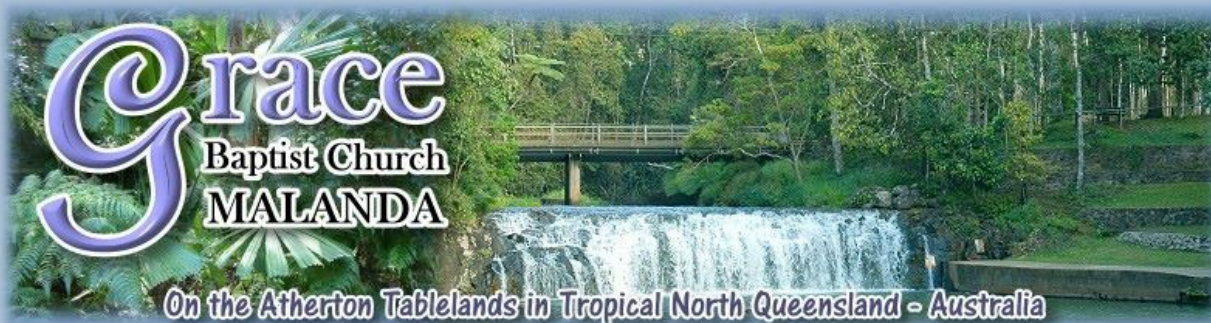
"WHEN THE ENEMY SHALL COME IN LIKE A FLOOD, THE SPIRIT OF THE  
LORD SHALL LIFT UP A STANDARD AGAINST HIM" (ISAIAH 59:19).

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