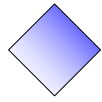


# The Voice of Truth



April 20, 2014

## The Little Maid By Jimmy Pettigrew

*“Now Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master, and honourable, because by him the LORD had given deliverance unto Syria: he was also a mighty man in valour, but he was a leper. And the Syrians had gone out by companies, and had brought away captive out of the land of Israel a little maid; and she waited on Naaman's wife. And she said unto her mistress, Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy. And one went in, and told his lord, saying, Thus and thus said the maid that is of the land of Israel!” (2 Kings 5:1-4).*

Though Naaman was captain of the Syrian army, a great military hero, in a position of honor and prestige, he had the dreaded disease of leprosy, which had no cure. His fame and greatness could not save him from his leprosy, just as a man's sincerity, honesty, fairness or goodness by itself will not save him from sin.

An Israelite maid had been stolen during one of the raids of a Syrian company; she ended up serving Naaman's wife. This young girl told of Elisha, who could heal Naaman.

(1) By observing this little maid, we see that she did not forget her religion though away from home. She remembered the power of God (2 Kings 5:3). We see that, though in a foreign land, she still thought of God and the prophet of God. This little maiden took her religion with her, even in this difficulty.

The motto with great many professing Christians seems to be when they leave home, they leave God and their religion home. When away from home some seem to forget that they are Christians, leaving God and their religion behind. Acting in a different way than while at home, when away from home some engage in sinful activities. Some fail to assemble with a congregation of God's people (Hebrews 10:25). Let us remember no matter where we go, God sees us (Psalm 33:13-14; Job 34:21; Hebrews

4:13). No matter where we go, let us take our religion with us, as Joseph took his into Egypt, as Daniel took his into Babylon, as this little Hebrew maid took hers into Syria.

(2). By observing this little maid we see her story is one of faith. She was faithful even in a difficult situation. She believed that God would take care of her when she was faithfully serving Him. Though she was a captive and had no means to help Naaman, she knew of one who could. She had faith in God. She knew that God was with Elisha, and therefore she had no doubt about Elisha's success.

Where is our faith in God's promises when difficulties and trials come our way? The secret of this little maid's faithfulness and usefulness was her strong and simple faith. Where is our faith in God's promises when discouragements come to us? Let us have the faith this little maid had.

(3) By observing this little maid we see she did not render evil for evil. She had been torn from her home from her native land by the rude hands of Syrian soldiers. Her family may have died at the hand of her master. Familiar faces, voices and places were far from her. Yet, she did not demonstrate a spirit of revenge. Instead of rejoicing to see her captor suffer, she pities him. She longs that he may be healed of that terrible disease. Have we ever felt just a little joy when someone who has wronged us meets misfortune?

A spirit of revenge is not the spirit of Christ (Matthew 5:44). The disciples of Jesus are to love those who personally hate, curse and despise them. How beautiful and wonderful would life on this earth be, if every person lived in obedience to this instruction of Jesus which has been well called by men, the golden rule (Matthew 7:12). The way to overcome evil is by doing good (Romans 12:19-21).

The little maid longed that her captor be healed; “And

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she said unto her mistress, Would God my Lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him

of his leprosy." (2 Kings 5:3) What a lesson this little maid has taught us! May we learn from this, and may God help us to demonstrate our Christianity at all times! \*

## "Thoughts Following The Bombing"

By Jarrod Jacobs

On Monday, 4/15/13, folks near the finish line of the Boston marathon suffered a great tragedy when two bombs exploded on the sidewalk. My understanding is that 4 people have been killed since Monday, and nearly 150 people have been injured in some manner. As more details emerge, we need to pray for the families affected, for the injured people, and for the doctors and nurses who are caring for the injured at this time. Some people will be coping and living with the consequences of this event for many years.

### We Know Who Was Really Responsible.

As I thought about these events and their consequences, my mind went to the source of what was behind it. What could cause people to want to commit such violence? The overwhelming majority of people attending the race were no doubt strangers to one another, as well as strangers to the bombers. Why would they want to commit this violence? While we may never fully know the reasons, I realized that we already know who ultimately was behind such an act – Satan!!

Satan tempted these people to commit such destruction, and they yielded to that temptation (Jas. 1:14-15; I Jn. 2:15-17). If we never know all the "whys" behind the bombings, we do know this! We know that Satan tempts man in this way because he is our enemy (I Pet. 5:8). He hates mankind and wants men to turn against each other. He is an enemy of love, of truth, and of right (Matt. 13:25-39). He wants confusion, and not peace (unlike God, I Cor. 14:33). He has been a murderer and a liar from the beginning (Jn. 8:44), and the murder and mayhem on that Monday is just more proof of it! Therefore, we need to remember that in this life, it is Christ who has given us the opportunity to be saved (Rom. 1:16). He loves us, and wants us safe. Christ is our true friend (Jn. 15:13)! Satan is our enemy!

### Life Is Uncertain.

As I thought about the bombing, my thoughts also turned to the people who were hurt. While the bombing was intentional, the people hurt were random victims. Had circumstances been different, any one of us could have been among the number of injured or dead (Ecc. 9:11-12).

Any one of us could have been the ones forced to endure pain and injury, or be among the families of those who are suffering. What can I learn from this event? One thing I am reminded of is when Christ referred to two events in Luke 13:1-5 where people suffered and died. In both cases (some folks Pilate had killed, and some folks killed by a wall falling on them), Jesus asked those listening: "Do you think they were worse offenders than all the others ...?" The answer was "No!" Their transgressions were not "worse" than others, even though they died at that point. Jesus then tells the crowd (and us), "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Lk. 13:3, 5)!

What I learn from the Boston bombing is that I need to make my life right with God while I can! We have no promise of tomorrow (Prov. 27:1). We have no guarantees! Making plans for the future is a good thing to do (Jas. 4:15). However, tomorrow is still in the hands of God, and not ours! Therefore, let us not put off doing what we know we need to do (Heb. 3:7-8; Mk. 16:16)! I notice in the Bible that when folks knew what they needed to do to be saved, they went right then and did it (Acts 2:41, 8:36-38, 16:30-34, 22:16)! This is but more evidence of the fact that we do not know what will be tomorrow. Therefore, take advantage of our opportunities to serve and please God while we still can!

As of this writing, I know there are at least 4 people who can make no more choices! Their bodies are at rest, and their voices are silent! All decisions they wanted to make, and all plans they had will now go undone! Friend, how long will it be before you or I are in that situation? (Job 14:1-2) Listen, do not let your children nor any other family member follow your casket to your grave with them knowing that you put off becoming a Christian!! Your family will miss you when you are gone. Don't let them grieve at your passing as those who have no hope (contr. I Thess. 4:13)!!

### This Life Is Not All There Is!

A final thought that went through my mind as I saw the horror and the aftermath of the bombing is that I was happy to know that this world is "not my home"! As the years pass, I long more and more for "that city which hath

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foundations whose builder and maker is God" (Heb. 11:10). This world will continue to get worse and worse because men have decided to direct their own steps (Jer. 10:23). As this continues, Christians will understand what Paul meant when he said, "My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better" (Phil. 1:23). That is the truth! Bombings, violence, wickedness, and similar things are not from God, but are from Satan.

### Conclusion

Seeing that bombings, mayhem, wickedness, and the like are not likely to end soon (II Tim. 3:13), what can we do? Are we powerless against such actions? By no means! "God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control" (II Tim. 1:7). We have power, for we have the

gospel of Christ at our fingertips (Rom. 1:16). The gospel is God's power to save and to change the hearts of men.

Think about where you were before you became a Christian (Acts 22:16). Do you want to go back to that life again? I don't either. Therefore, let us take this gospel, this life-changing message, and tell others about it. When we do this, then the world can truly change for the better. Change does not come at the point of a spear or the muzzle of a gun. Change comes when the hearts of men repent and turn back to the Lord (II Pet. 3:9)! Truly, "the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ" (II Cor. 10:4-5). Credit: The Old Paths - 4/21/13 ♦

## Fellowship Or Folly-ship By Lowell Blasingame

Fellowship! It's a good Bible word but like some others, it is often abused and misused. John said that we have fellowship with God by walking in the light (1 Jn. 1:7). Some folks don't seem to be able to say the word without conjuring visions of fried chicken, coffee and donuts, etc. or without frolicking through church sponsored social activities.

The truth is that such no more fits the Biblical use of the word fellowship than sprinkling or pouring fit the Biblical use of baptism. Neither do such activities conform to what former gospel preachers have taught us about the work of the church. The late B. C. Goodpasture, who edited the *Gospel Advocate* for years, in answering a question about the work of the church, said: "This question can be answered both negatively and positively. It is not the mission of the church to furnish amusement for the world, or even for its members. For the church to turn aside from its divine work to furnish amusement and recreation is to pervert its mission. If the church will discharge its duty in preaching the gospel, in edifying its members, and helping the worthy poor, it will not have desire or the time to amuse or entertain" (*Gospel Advocate*, pg. 484, 1948).

Former gospel preachers taught us that it was the duty of the home, not the church, to provide recreational activities. I believe that, not just because preachers such as Hardeman, Goodpasture, Lyles, Boles, etc. taught it, but because it is what the Bible teaches (1 Cor. 11:22, 34). Don't be fooled into thinking that Paul is merely dealing with an abuse of the Lord's supper. He is pointing out that social activities belong to the home and ought to be kept

there.

Some churches of Christ have adopted this denominational folly. Like Israel of old, they have sat down to eat and drink and arise to play! They erect play houses called "fellowship halls" or "multi-purpose" buildings, employ a "Youth Minister" to cheerlead the folly and immediately following the worship, the pulpit is removed, the goal posts set in place, the chairs pushed back and the ball game or shuffleboard play begins! I am not exaggerating. I have before me at this writing *The Family Flyer* of the Madison church of Christ, Madison, TN. and among its activities are listed Softball, Volleyball, Ping Pong, Ladies Slimnastics, Bowling, a CPR class, Jogging (included is a jogger's prayer), and Golf. Among the events for the "Golden Agers" are a Halloween party, Christmas crafts and a Valentine party! Now if you think that these are activities belonging to the work of the church that Christ bought with His blood, you and I have been reading two different books!

Fellowship or folly-ship, which is it brethren? If we initiate a practice that is unscriptural, then misuse a Bible word for its justification, are we any different from those who substitute sprinkling for immersion and call it baptism? Are we so foolish as to suppose that gospel preachers of the past who rejected church sponsored recreation did not believe in and have fellowship with other children of God?

Jeremiah called Judah a gadding bride for trimming her ways to be like nations about her (Jer. 2:32-37). Is the

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further deviations from the Lord's way.

church of Christ of which you are a member becoming like the denominations about us? If it has a "Youth Minister", will he have a "Youth Gospel" and preach to a "Youth church?" Why not a special "ministry" for spinsters and bachelors? Such foolishness simply paves the way for

There are still those who cry for the old paths (**Jer. 6:16**) and plead for brethren to walk in them. Are you one of them? ♦

### Satan Will Provide A Way

There is no doubt that the Devil is a personal being. Personal names and personal pronouns are used with reference to him. The name Satan means an adversary. In (**Rev. 9:11**), he is Abaddon or Apollyon which means destroyer and deceiver, which describes his purpose and work. He is called the prince of the world (**Jn. 12:31**), a liar, and a murderer from the beginning (**Jn. 8:44**), and the god of this world (**2 Cor. 4:4**). He is the great dragon, the old serpent, the deceiver of the whole world (**Rev. 12:9-10**). The adversary (**1 Pet. 5:8**); an enemy (**Mat. 13:28**); the evil one (**Mat. 13:19**); and the tempter (**Mat. 4:3**). In other words, he is an enemy of God and man, and uses his utmost endeavors to rob God of His glory, and men of their souls.

When Adam and Eve had sinned and sought for some way to attempt to justify their wrong, Satan provided an excuse for both. When Jonah was attempting to flee from God he found a ship conveniently waiting for him. Satan made it very convenient for him to disobey or ignore God's command.

Some folks say. Yes, we will be in the services Sunday if nothing happens. I know immediately that they probably will not be present, for Satan will see that something will happen. When we look for a way to forsake the assembly, a way to not give as we have been prospered, a way to get out of working in the work of the Lord, or for some way to justify our sins, **SATAN WILL PROVIDE A WAY!**

In this life Satan will provide ways for us to neglect, put-off, or ignore Christ. But, remember (**Jas. 4:7**)! ♦

A faith that will not take us to  
Every services of the Lord's church  
Will not take us to heaven! ♦

### What Must I Do To Be Saved?

- Hear and Learn - Rom. 10:17 m. 10:9-10 ; 1 Pet. 3:21 ; John 6:45; 17:3
- Believe - Heb. 11:6; John 6:29; 8:24
- Repent - Luke 13:3; Acts 3:19; 17:30
- Confess the Lord - Matt. 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Pet. 3:21
- Be Baptized - Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16; Gal. 3:26-27
- Continue in the Apostles' Teaching - Acts 2:42; 2 Tim. 3:14-17

### About the Hillcrest church of Christ

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#### Schedule of Assembly

Bible Study: Sunday, 9:00am  
Worship Service: Sunday, 10:00am  
Bible Study: Wednesday, 7:00pm\*

\*A song service is held on the last Wednesday of every month

www.hillcrestchurchofchrist.com