



NON-PROFIT



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TAX-EXEMPT

“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” MARK 16:15

April 2024

FROM US TO YOU

Even as Christians, it's not hard to get depressed these days listening to the news on television at night. There are so many unpleasant things we hear about; wars, economic problems, food shortages, crime, political upheaval, etc. Being Christians, we want to keep our eyes on Jesus and walk above these miseries. It's rather like Simon Peter when he saw Jesus during the dark of the night walking on water. He instantly wanted to get out of the boat and walk on the water with Him. Jesus seemed so calm. He wasn't nervous or fearful. One felt a spirit of peace just being near Him. "When the disciples saw Him walking on the lake, they were terrified. 'It's a ghost,' they said, and cried out in fear. But Jesus immediately said to them: 'Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid.' 'Lord, if it's You,' Peter replied, 'tell me to come to You on the water.' 'Come,' He said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, 'Lord, save me!'" (Matthew 14:26-30 NIV). The wind represented all of the problems of the world that we face. Peter took his eyes off of Jesus and began to look down at the water. It was then that he became fearful and began to sink and started to drown.

"Immediately Jesus reached out His hand and caught him. 'You of little faith,' He said, 'why did you doubt?'" And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. Then those who were in the boat worshiped Him, saying, 'Truly you are the Son of God'" (Matthew 14:31-33 NIV). Peter was full of faith when he kept his eyes on Jesus and got out of the boat. It's when he became distracted by the wind whipping around him that he began to panic and drown. The distractions these days are many. However, God has a way of spreading His Son shine, and the intrusions disappear. What a joy it has been to get letters from former prison inmates male and female, who tell us what a difference our newsletter meant to them when they were in prison and how much it helped them. Now they are out of prison and they have asked us how they can keep getting it.

Anne wrote back and told them that our newsletter (which prison inmates call a "Bible Study") is freely available on our website. We started our website decades ago in the hope of encouraging the public to support us financially and prayerfully. However, God is using our website to spread His Son shine all around the world. It was another wonderful blessing to receive emails from missionaries as far away as Africa and India telling us how much our ministry has meant to them, and the orphanages they run. We have noticed that our prayer request site has been getting much bigger as well from people in countries everywhere. If we only had more funding we could do so much more! So pray for us personally, our health and well-being too. Satan is always going to attack more viciously the ones whom God uses to spread His message. Satan's message of evil gets a lot

of attention through much of the media because the devil likes to brag about the evil he has done. Let's spread the Lord's message of salvation and Christian joy everywhere we can.

Please pray for Israel, so little a country, but the holy land of Jesus Christ, the prophets, apostles, and the Bible. Many of them suffered so much and paid such a painful price to get the gospel out for us (Matthew 5:10-12, Mark 13:9, 2 Corinthians 11:22-28). And pray for the United States as well. The devil is out to destroy that which was founded by God-fearing Christians, but is now in the devil's crosshairs. Pray especially for America's next election, that the Lord will let the best candidate win and will punish the evildoers. Pray also for God to help the best candidates win in Congress, in the House and the Senate. Pray for America's borders and that the country's crime problem will greatly decrease and our cities and towns will be safe.

With so much crime, murders, and destruction, how can a Christian feel joy in his or her heart? It's simple if you know your Bible very well. Jesus knew that the reason He was born into this world



was to die a horrible, agonizing death in our place. All His life He knew that. It meant He would also have to endure a vicious beating, punches, mockery and ridicule from His own people. Yet, instead of going through life in a spirit of doom and gloom as most humans would, He was more concerned about the welfare of mankind. He had great compassion for other people (Matt. 9:36) and eagerness to be reunited with His Father in Heaven (John 17:1-5). Moreover, He knew what laid ahead of Him after His death and resurrection. Jesus referred to what would happen to him after His death and resurrection as being "glorified" (John 12:23). He knew He was going back to Heaven,

but what He was really looking forward to was the multitude of Christians He would be taking up with Him. He told the thief on the cross, "...I tell you the truth, today you will be with Me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43 NIV). That day Jesus would be emptying past Paradise and taking those whom He had redeemed up to Heaven with Him. Paradise was a chamber next to Hell, in the center of the earth, containing those waiting for redemption. "This is why it says: 'When He ascended on high, He led captives in His train and gave gifts to men.' (What does 'He ascended' mean except that He also descended to the lower, earthly regions? He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe)" (Eph. 4:8-10 NIV).

After Jesus died on the cross, His spirit left His body and descended into the depth of the earth where Paradise was. Not only was Jesus planning on taking those with Him up to Heaven but all the redeemed who would in the future love Him. In Christ, all the joys of Heaven await us forever. When we get to Heaven, this world will just be a dim memory. There will be peace, joy, and glory for evermore!

In the Lord's service, *Eric and Anne Kaestner*

THE LOVE OF THIS WORLD

By Anne Kaestner

To most people the love of this world is something you would expect from a Christian. Love is one of the fruits of the Spirit of God (Galatians 5:22-23) and one would expect it to be up there with kindness and generosity as character traits that would seem consistent with the Spirit filled life (Galatians 5:25). However, the Bible tells us, “*Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does—comes not from the Father but from the world*” (1 John 2:15-16 NIV). Moreover, just a short time before His arrest, Jesus prayed, “*...Father, the time has come... I have brought You glory on earth by completing the work You gave Me to do. And now, Father, glorify Me in Your presence with the glory I had with You before the world began. I have revealed You to those whom you gave Me out of the world. They were Yours; You gave them to Me and they have obeyed Your word. Now they know that everything You have given Me comes from You. For I gave them the words You gave Me. They knew with certainty that I came from You, and they believed that You sent Me. I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those You have given Me, for they are Yours. All I have is Yours, and all You have is Mine. And glory has come to Me through them. I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of Your name—the name You gave Me—so that they may be one as We are one*” (John 17:1-11 NIV).

Who were those whom God the Father gave to Jesus Christ, God the Son? Well, first we know that they were those who were taken “*out of the world.*” Yet they are still “*in the world.*” We also know that Jesus prayed to His Father, “*They were Yours.*” So we know that their hearts were right with God the Father. Jesus said that His Father gave them to Him and, He prayed, “*they have obeyed Your Word.*” We know from scripture that Jesus, God’s Son, is also known of as “*the Word of God*” (John 1:1-14). So Jesus is saying that these people that God gave to Him have obeyed Him. And Jesus prayed, “*I gave them the words You gave Me. They knew with certainty that I came from You, and they believed that You sent Me.*” So we know that Jesus taught them the things God wanted them to know, and they accepted the fact that Jesus was and is the Son of God. So how can these people God the Father gave Him be **in** the world when Jesus specifically stated that they have been taken **out** of the world?

Jesus said, “*No servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other...*” (Luke 16:13 NIV). The same is true with worlds. You cannot become a part of the Kingdom of God (Matthew 5:10) if your allegiance is to this earthly world that Satan runs (see Matthew 4:8-9). James put it another way. He said, “*You adulterous people, don’t you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God*” (James 4:4 NIV). James wasn’t talking about earthly adultery, as in a marriage. As Christians, we are supposed to be a part of the Bride of Christ (2 Corinthians 11:2). We are supposed to be loyal to our heavenly Bridegroom (Matthew 9:15) and do that which pleases Him. You can’t serve your husband as a loyal wife when your heart is more interested in your husband’s enemy. “*Or do you think Scripture says without reason that the Spirit He caused to live in us envies intensely? But He gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: ‘God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.’ Submit yourselves, then,*

to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and He will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded” (James 4:5-8 NIV).

If your allegiance is torn between Christ and the things of this world, you are allowing yourself to be pulled in two directions at the same time. You are double minded. “*For the LORD thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God*” (Deuteronomy 4:24 KJV). As Christians, we are physically **in** this world. But our hearts should not belong to the things of this world. Jesus was very blunt when He spoke to people. He didn’t worry about hurting people’s feelings or being tactful (Luke 7:44-45 and Matthew 15:25-26). And Jesus gave examples of people who acted the right way or the wrong way. So ladies, I’ll give you an example of someone who you should **not** be like. Frankly, one thing that always bothered me about the late Tammy Bakker is how double minded she was. She claimed to love God, but her actions and lavish lifestyle proved she loved the things of this world more. She even wrote a book entitled, “*I’ve Got To Be Me.*” By contrast, the Bible says, “*...we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose. For those God foreknew He also predestined to be*

conformed to the likeness of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brothers” (Romans 8:28-29 NIV. Also, see Matthew 8:20). God planned ahead of

time for Christians to be conformed, or changed, and to become Christlike. No one knows what Jesus looked like. Therefore, the “*likeness*” (in the New International Version) or the “*image*” (in the King James Version) refers to the personality traits of Jesus. Tammy Bakker was the complete opposite. She was an example of what a Christian should **not** be like. Her makeup alone looked so thick that even supermarket tabloids called her “*clown face.*” A true Christian should love Christ so much that you should be able to see the light of God in his or her eyes. Strong makeup diminishes that.

Jesus doesn’t want any lukewarm Christians. He said, “*I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of My mouth*” (Revelation 3:15-16 NIV). If you want to live for the things of this world, then don’t go around telling people that you are a Christian. It makes Christ look bad! “*It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age, if they fall away, to be brought back to repentance, because to their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting Him to public disgrace*” (Hebrews 6:4-6 NIV). Christians, would you like someone going around doing the opposite of what you believe and then saying that you told them to do it? That’s what it is like when someone calls themselves a Christian and then lives a worldly life. What does the Bible mean by worldly? It means carnal. Of course, we know that someone who commits murder, rapes, steals or tortures someone is not acting like a Christian. However, someone who acts superior with a snooty, snobbish, self-indulgent attitude is also sinful and worldly as far as Christ is concerned (Romans 1:29-31). Jesus described such a person. “*You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked*” (Revelation 3:17 NIV).

I have known people who act like that but go to church on Sunday, so they consider themselves righteous. They look down on people



who have come from troubled backgrounds and belittle or ignore them. That's no way to encourage others to come to Christ. When I was in my twenties, before I met and married my husband, Eric, I lived in my own apartment on Staten Island. I was working in Manhattan at that time, and it was much easier to take the ferry to work than the Long Island Railroad from my parent's house. The building I lived in had mostly single occupants in it like myself. They knew I was a Christian as I had developed a reputation for talking about the Lord. However, I got along with my neighbors fairly well. One weekend they decided to have a party for the occupants of the building. I was invited, but I didn't feel comfortable in such a carnal atmosphere with intoxication and worldly music, so I didn't go. I was in my apartment, but I could hear all the rock music that was playing outside and all the laughing. Suddenly a woman's scream pierced through the hallway outside my apartment. I opened the door to see what was going on and someone told me that it was Linda, an attractive young woman who had moved in with her husband. I don't remember her real name, so I will call her Linda. She had left the party and gone back to her apartment to get something and one of the male partygoers had followed her back and, for some reason, had punched her.

Linda's scream had caught the attention of the partygoers, and a trail of them came running up the stairs to her apartment. I don't know why he had attacked her, but some of the tenants at the party were off duty policemen. They arrested the attacker mostly to keep him safe from Linda's muscular and angry husband.

The weekend passed, and it was Monday. Linda was small and petite. And although I didn't want to get involved in anything to do with Sunday night's party, the Lord gave me such a tremendous burden for her that, although I tried to forget the whole thing, He would not let me. Throughout Monday the Holy Spirit kept bringing her back to my mind. This was before I went to work for Merrill Lynch, and I was going on job interviews all that day. Needless to say, I did not have much money. But I could not stand the burden anymore, so I knew I would have to go and see Linda. However, I didn't want to go empty-handed. So, after work, I went to visit Linda. I took her a nice basket of fruit and nuts to cheer her up. The fruit had been fresh and beautiful. They sold it at a grocery store in the Manhattan ferry terminal.

I didn't have much time to shop for a gift, so it had seemed like a good idea. Little did I realize that the Lord had carefully orchestrated the events leading up to my visit so that I would, unknowingly, choose a symbol of His love and compassion working in the hearts and lives of those who serve Him! It was a symbol of "...the fruit of the Spirit..." (Galatians 5:22 NIV). Linda was alone when I arrived, but she welcomed me into her apartment, and we began to talk. I did not even have to bring up the subject of Christianity. My desire was to comfort her and to be neighborly. So we began to talk. She told me that several years earlier, she had attended a Christian church. She had gone there alone because she was hoping to find out more about God. However, she was quickly discouraged by the other churchgoers. Linda described a rich church where the women dressed in fancy clothes. But Linda didn't have any fancy clothing. So she felt that people were staring at her in a hostile manner.

No one welcomed her. Everyone she saw at the church was cold and indifferent. The other girls her age saw her and began giggling and whispering among themselves. Linda left after the service with pain in her heart, and she never went back. She had concluded that God was angry at her because of her lifestyle, and she had given up

all hope of finding love in Christ. It was then that I knew why the Lord had laid such a heavy burden on me to visit with her! "Linda, Jesus loves so much that He wanted me to come and tell you how much He cares. Those people at the church you went to were wrong to treat you as they did. They weren't living for God at all. They didn't even know Him! For if they had truly known Christ, they would have reflected His love for you!" Another neighbor came over at that time, and I knew it was time for me to leave. A few days later I received a thank you card from Linda for the fruit I had taken her.

In the early days of the modern Christian movement, in the years following the Azusa Street Revival, the rules of the true church were far more restrictive than today. Women were discouraged from wearing any makeup at all. And dressing in anything expensive or flashy clothing was strictly off limits. These days the highly restrict dress code has been loosened somewhat. But young women wearing sexy bikini's on the beach is sending off very unchristian signals! What would you like to be wearing when Jesus comes back at the time of the Rapture (1 Corinthians 15:51-54)? And Christian men shouldn't dress like a punk rock group or the other extreme, and look like Liberace. And, speaking of Liberace, you couldn't find anyone that would be a greater example of worldliness than him. Granted, he was blessed with a great talent for music. He knew how to keep the attention of the people. However, his flamboyant lifestyle and appearance was just the opposite of the way a Christian should act. At least, in his case, he didn't claim he was a Born Again (John 3:3) Christian.

I saw a television interview with Liberace a year or so before he died. He claimed he had been very sick and had almost died some time before that. I think he implied he had had cancer at the time. As he was talking about it with the host, he kept emphasizing that he had willed himself well. He said that he kept thinking about all he had, his beautiful house, his expensive car, his custom-made clothes, his fine furniture, and that made him feel better. A year or so later he died. The secret of his disease was finally exposed by the coroner. An autopsy had shown that Liberace had died due to HIV, known as AIDS.

Most people think he lived a good life. However, it was later revealed that he was not a happy man. The only times that he was happy was during his stage performances.

This reminds me of the story Jesus told about the rich man and Lazarus. "There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores and longing to eat what fell from the rich man's table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores. The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. In Hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. So he called to him, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.' But Abraham replied, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony'" (Luke 16:19-25 NIV). Jesus also said, "What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matthew 16:26 NIV). I remember when I was working at Merrill Lynch someone mentioned the fact that Nelson Rockefeller, a former governor of New York State, had died in the bed of his mistress after having sexual relations with her. **(Continued on Page 4)**



THE LOVE OF THIS WORLD (Continued From Page 3)

A young associate that was there at the time said, admiringly, “What a way to go!” But all I could think of was the story of Lazarus and the rich man.

As I was researching the life of Liberace for this article, and I felt so sorry for him. Very few people knew how sad and unfulfilled he really felt. Yes, he was very famous and wealthy, and he flaunted his wealth around to impress people. However, those who knew him saw how miserable he felt in his heart. Ultimately riches and wealth doesn't really satisfy the human soul. All it can do is make you more comfortable in your misery. We were all made for a specific purpose by God. We were specifically designed to serve Him. And nothing this world has can ever take His place. “*For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do*” (Ephesians 2:10 NIV). I am not saying that riches will doom you to Hell. No. Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish ruling council (see John 3:1), was rich. And so was Joseph of Arimathea. However, both men risked their lives for Christ. Joseph of Arimathea had purchased a nice burial tomb for himself to be used when he died. It was in a beautiful garden setting, a rich man's tomb. Eric and I were there when we visited Israel in 1984. Nevertheless, after Jesus died both Nicodemus (John 19:39) and “*...Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. Now Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he feared the Jews. With Pilate's permission, he came and took the body away*” (John 19:38 NIV).

Both men were admitting that they loved Christ to do such a thing. No one would have been so brave unless they really loved Jesus. Even Peter was afraid to be known as a disciple of Christ at first (see Matthew 26:33-75). Thank God Peter finally revealed his love for Jesus after the day of Pentecost when he received the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4) that Jesus had promised them (John 20:21-22). We saw the empty slab where they had laid the body of Jesus before He had risen. Hallelujah! However, the point that I am trying to make is that both men loved Jesus enough to risk losing all their wealth, stature, and lives for Him. The apostle Paul once had riches, prestige, and acceptance among his peers as well. Even so, Paul said, “*But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith. I want to know Christ and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in His sufferings, becoming like Him in His death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead*” (Philippians 3:7-11 NIV).

Now let's go back to the message Jesus was sending to His church, through His apostle John, about backsliding. Jesus was telling the church how to avoid becoming lukewarm. He said, “*I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see. Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent. Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with Me*” (Revelation 3:18-20 NIV). Lukewarm Christians are very often from nations that once

knew Christ but are in a backslidden state. The United States, Europe, and English-speaking countries like Australia are among them. They are nations that were once greatly blessed by God due to the dedication and obedience to Christ of a prior generation. They received the good things of God as an inheritance. And, as children who are born to wealthy parents often act, they have become used to all the prosperity that came easily to them. They have taken it for granted and become complacent. They didn't go through all the hardship and bad times that their predecessors did, and so they tend to despise godliness. As Paul stated, “*The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned*” (1 Corinthians 2:14 NIV).

Jesus is saying that He is so concerned about His lukewarm church that He will sometimes use drastic measures to get their attention. It's like a loving parent giving a naughty child a spanking. God says, “*In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. And you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons: 'My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when He rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines those He loves, and He punishes everyone He accepts as a son.' Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father?*” (Hebrews 12:4-7 NIV). Jesus is telling

you that you need to buy gold from Him refined in the fire. In other words, you need to go through some difficult times so that you will realize how much you need the Lord. Then, when you get desperate enough to repent of your sins and seek the Lord's forgiveness, you are buying spiritual gold. The gold is not anything carnal. It only has spiritual value, to keep you out of Hell and the Lake of Fire (see Revelation 20:10-15, 21:8).

Peter, a man who suffered much in his walk with Christ (Luke 22:31-32), put it this way. He wrote to the early church where Christians were greatly persecuted by the Roman Empire. He said that in spite of all that they were suffering, Christ gave them

“*...an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in Heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. Though you have not seen Him, you love Him; and even though you do not see Him now, you believe in Him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls*” (1 Peter 1:4-9 NIV). Your “spanking” from God may come in various hurtful ways. Often it is a death in the family, or some painful affliction. With my grandmother, I believe she prayed “Lord, whatever it takes, bring my granddaughter, Anne, to America and get her saved.” It took my grandmother's lung cancer and two years of separation from her husband before my mother finally acquiesced and brought me to America. And I accepted Christ at the Ridgewood Pentecostal Church when I was ten years old. The late actor, Peter Falk, who played “Colombo” on television, was interviewed one day. He said, “Success and wealth doesn't bring happiness.” Only Christ in your heart can do that!

