



NON-PROFIT

# The Good News Letter

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TAX-EXEMPT

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

March 2024

## FROM US TO YOU

Spring is just around the corner. After such a cold winter that’s good news. American politics is also changing. This used to be a united country back in the days when Christianity was more prevalent. Now it is so divided. As Jesus said, “...*Any kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and a house divided against itself will fall*” (Luke 11:17 NIV). Even so, our faith remains strong because it is securely grounded on the solid Rock of Jesus Christ. As Jesus said, “...*everyone who hears these words of Mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash*” (Matthew 7:24-27 NIV).

One of the problems with the church today is that people are hearing so many different teachings about Christianity that they don’t know who the Rock of their salvation really is. The Catholic Church teaches erroneously that the Lord’s disciple, Simon Peter, is the rock. They say that Christ built His church on Peter and that Peter is the head of the Christian church. That is so wrong! No wonder people are fearful and confused when they get taught such nonsense. At the Vatican, in Rome, they even have a building called St. Peter’s Basilica. Peter loved Jesus with all his heart and was one of Christ’s top three favorite disciples (John, James, Peter). Peter’s faith in Christ was so strong that he was martyred in a horrible way. He was crucified upside down. It was because Peter said he was not worthy to die the same way as his Savior. Peter is Anne’s favorite disciple. However, Peter is **not** the rock the true church was by built upon! Christ is. This is what caused the confusion.

One day Jesus asked His disciples, “... ‘*Who do people say the Son of Man is?*’ They replied, ‘*Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.*’ ‘*But what about you?*’ He asked. ‘*Who do you say I am?*’ Simon Peter answered, ‘*You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.*’ Jesus replied, ‘*Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by My Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this **rock** I will build My church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in Heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven*’” (Matthew 16:13-19 NIV). What was Jesus referring to when He said, “*on **this rock** I will build My church*”? It wasn’t Peter. It was his **faith**. That strong faith (see Luke 17:6) was what gave Peter the courage to stand up to the power of the Roman Empire and boldly declare his love for Christ.

Do not underestimate how strong a Christian’s faith must be to daily live for Christ and be willing, if necessary to die for Him. Jesus

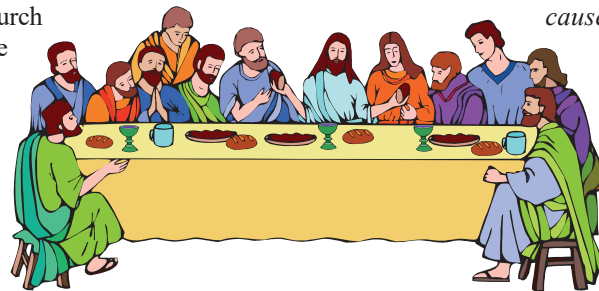
said, “*Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to turn a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law—a man’s enemies will be the members of his own household. Anyone who **loves** his father or mother **more** than Me is not worthy of Me; anyone who **loves** his son or daughter **more** than Me is not worthy of Me; and anyone who does not take his cross and follow Me is not worthy of Me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for My sake will find it*” (Matthew 10:34-39 NIV).

In other words, Jesus is saying, “love your family if you want to. But don’t put them ahead of Me.” God put you ahead of His own Son, whom He greatly loves (see John 3:16). So He expects us to put Jesus first. So if your son, daughter, parent, husband, or wife comes between Christ and you, put Christ first! Adam declared that a husband and wife are to be considered “one flesh” before God (Genesis 2:24). So Jesus said, “*If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go into Hell, where the fire never goes out. And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than to have two feet and be thrown into Hell*” (Mark 9:43-45 NIV). And Jesus said, if it comes to that, if you’re not willing to die for Him, you will end up in Hell when you do die (see Matthew 10:38-39).

Jesus is the Rock of our salvation. Paul told the Corinthian church, “...*I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers, that our forefathers... all ate the same **spiritual food** and drank the same **spiritual drink**; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and **that rock was Christ**” (1 Corinthians 10:1-4 NIV). What do we do at holy communion? Remember what Jesus said, “*While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to His disciples, saying, ‘Take and eat; this is My body.’ Then He took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, ‘Drink from it, all of you. This is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins’*” (Matthew 26:26-28 NIV). Jesus said, “*Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is real food and My blood is real drink. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood remains in Me, and I in him*” (John 6:54-56 NIV).*

If you think that living for Christ is like a big love boat you are so wrong. It is a battleship. So, as Paul said to Timothy, “*Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No one serving as a soldier gets involved in civilian affairs—he wants to please his commanding officer*” (2 Timothy 2:3-4 NIV). So “...*fight the good fight, holding on to **faith** and a good conscience. Some have rejected these and so have shipwrecked their **faith***” (1 Timothy 1:18-19 NIV).

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



# Are You a Lukewarm Christian?

By Anne Kaestner

Are you a lukewarm Christian? I am thoroughly convinced that many people who think of themselves as being good Christians are lukewarm. This is important because, speaking of the spirit of one of His end time churches, Jesus 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). Jesus said, *"...No one is good—except God alone"* (Mark 10:18 NIV). As far as God is concerned, the basic human *"...heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked..."* (Jeremiah 17:9 KJV). The New International version of the Bible puts it another way. It says we humans are *"...deceitful above all things and beyond cure..."* (Jeremiah 17:9 NIV). "Beyond cure?" That's about as hopeless as you can get! We humans cannot do a thing to make ourselves acceptable to God. We all have brains capable of sometimes doing great things. Human nature has come up with many medicines that can cure all kinds of disease. We have built rockets capable of going to Mars, and walk on the moon. However, God says that there is no way in the world that we can cure the disease that separates us from Him. It's called sin (Romans 6:12). So why did God create such a race of pitiful, hopeless, wicked people? The answer is He didn't create us this way. Something happened to put us in this condition.

The Lord created the whole world perfect, including mankind. *"...God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground'"* (Genesis 1:27-28 NIV). *"God saw all that he had made, and it was very good..."* (Genesis 1:31 NIV). I'm sure you have heard the story of Adam and Eve many times. However, I want to go back in time much further. Notice that God told the couple to *"...fill the earth and subdue it..."* (Genesis 1:27-28 NIV). Subdue means "bring under your control." Bring what under their control? Wasn't everything brand new? The word "subdue" implies that something is not under control. The King James Translation of the Bible words it a bit differently. It reads, *"...Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it..."* (Genesis 1:28 KJV).

"Replenish the earth" means to put something back to replace whatever had been taken out of it. So that implies that something had existed on the earth previously. However, God just finished making the earth. So what could have been there before? Now let's take a look at the first two verses of the Bible. *"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters"* (Genesis 1:1-2 NIV). Anyone who knows anything about God knows that He makes everything perfect. In fact, God is the very essence of perfection. He doesn't create things that are *"formless, empty and dark."* Therefore, something had to happen to the earth to put it in that condition. The implication seems to be that there was an enormous amount of time that existed between verse one and verse two. We are left with the assumption that something very bad happened because it took God six days to remake this earth and after that He needed to rest (Genesis 2:2). That six days was just spent on making repairs on something that already existed. So it seems logical to imagine that making this whole planet from

scratch must have taken a lot longer, and a lot more work.

The New Testament sheds more light on the creation because it tells us more about it. *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning"* (John 1:1-2 NIV). No, it's not as confusing as it sounds. It is only talking about God, no one else. It refers to someone called "the Word." It tells us that this person was **with** God in the beginning of everything. Then it tells us that the person referred to as "the Word" was in fact God Himself. Now, let's go back to Genesis again and take a look at something God said before He created mankind. He said, *"...Let Us make man in **Our** image, in **Our** likeness..."* (Genesis 1:26 NIV). He didn't say, "In My image" or "In My likeness." He spoke in the plural. So we know that God said it, and someone else, who was also God, said it. Obviously, it was "the Word," who was also God. Now, let's find out who is referred to as "the Word." The Bible says, *"He came to that which was His own, but His own did not receive Him. Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God"* (John 1:11-12 NIV).

It says He came to His own. But this is God we are talking about. And there is only one true God. So who are His own? Then it says,

He gave the right to **become** children of God. What kind of beings can become children of God? Now, it says

they are, *"children born **not** of natural descent,*

*nor of human decision or a husband's will, but*

*born of God"* (John 1:13 NIV). So we know

that they are **not** just children that are just

born the normal human way. People think

that all of us are born children of God. That

verse says that those who are born the natural

way are **not** children of God. However,

through a special relationship with the person

known as "the Word" they can **become** God's

children. Now let's find out a bit more about

"the Word." It says, *"The Word became flesh and*

*made His dwelling among us. We have seen His*

*glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from*

*the Father, full of grace and truth"* (John 1:14 NIV). The Word

is someone who took upon Himself human flesh. The apostle John,

who wrote the book bearing his name, said *"We have seen His glory."*

So the Word took on a human appearance, He became flesh. And He

is capable of making us humans children of God. And He has been

seen by humans like John, who also saw His glory. Obviously, this

is referring to God's Son, Jesus Christ. *"For there is one God and*

*one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave*

*Himself as a ransom for all men..."* (1 Timothy 2:5-6 NIV). Only

He has the power to make us righteousness enough to become chil-

dren of God. You can't do it through good works or human efforts

alone (Ephesians 2:8-10).

Now, speaking of Him, the scripture also says, *"Through **Him** all*

*things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been*

*made. In Him was **life**, and that life was the **light** of men. The light*

*shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it"* (John

1:3-5 NIV). So the Bible tells us that Christ made everything, in-

cluding us. It says *"the LORD God formed the man from the dust of*

*the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the*

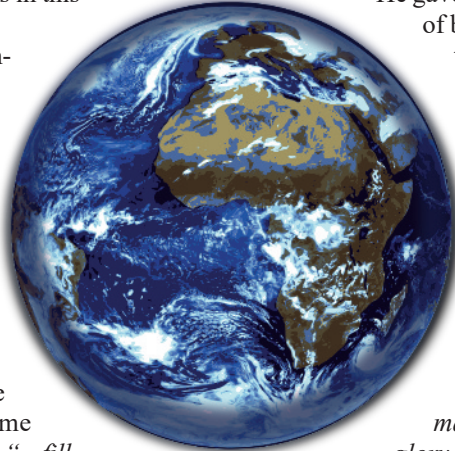
*man became a living being"* (Genesis 2:7 NIV). So it was the one we

know of as Jesus Christ who did that. It was His breath. And Jesus

implied that He was and is the Son of God (John 3:16). Now let's

talk a little more about Their relationship. We learn about this through

the inspired writing of Solomon (see 2 Timothy 3:16). God the Son





spoke about the relationship that He had with God the Father while They worked together to create a perfect world for all of us.

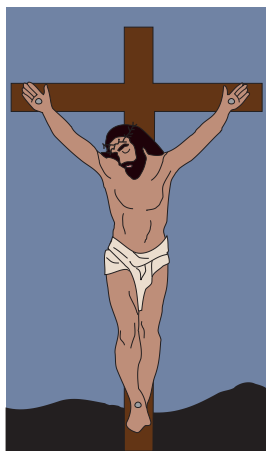
He said, *“I was appointed from eternity, from the beginning, before the world began. When there were no oceans, I was given birth, when there were no springs abounding with water; before the mountains were settled in place, before the hills, I was given birth, before He made the earth or its fields or any of the dust of the world. I was there when He set the heavens in place, when He marked out the horizon on the face of the deep, when He established the clouds above and fixed securely the fountains of the deep, when He gave the sea its boundary so the waters would not overstep His command, and when He marked out the foundations of the earth. Then I was the craftsman at His side. I was filled with delight day after day, rejoicing always in His presence, rejoicing in His whole world and delighting in mankind”* (Proverbs 8:23-31 NIV). God, both Father and Son, were enthusiastic even more than parents awaiting the birth of a child they had longed for. Incidentally, there are no people on other planets. The Bible tell us that the only other intelligent form of life that God had made were His heavenly angels. And one third of God’s angels had mutinied against Him (Revelation 12:4). However, after their rebellion, God decided to create a new race of intelligent life, humans! To put it in human terms, it was as if God the Father was the architect and God the Son was the builder.

The point is that God wanted to be loved. He still had two thirds of His angels that stayed faithful to Him. And it’s hard to imagine God being lonely. But He knew that He had so much to give to those who loved Him. So the idea of creating a whole new type of intelligent life made Him excited. However, God didn’t want any robot or android. You can’t get love out of a robot, even one that’s built like a person. God wanted a human race that would love Him because He is worthy. Therefore, the person had to have the ability to choose whether to serve God and love Him or not. As God the Father and God the Son worked together to create an exquisitely beautiful world for us, they greatly anticipated what this new race of humans would be like. As a rich man would dote on the child he loves, God was thrilled with the prospect of having a human race that would love, respect, and serve Him. But, They considered, what if something goes wrong? God had to consider the possibility that humans could sin and reject Him, and lose all that He wanted to give them. Therefore, a plan had to be conceived to put things back the way God wanted them. And so, sometime prior to the creation of the first human, a fallback position had to be worked out to put things right.

The plan was that humans would be created to be eternal beings. So, if they became sinful, they would eventually die physically as well as spiritually. Even when their human body died because of sin, their soul would continue to exist somewhere. If their sin was not paid for they would be in the same situation as the angels who mutinied against God. Those fallen angels, whose designation in the modern English Bible was changed to “demons,” will eventually spend an eternity in Hell (2 Peter 2:4). There is nothing in between. In eternity, there is Heaven and there is Hell. Purgatory is just a lie conceived by the Catholic Church in order to make more money. There is no such place. There’s no such word in the Bible. So if humans are not holy enough to go to Heaven, Hell is the only alternative. However, mankind would start out in a family unit. Adam, the prototype of mankind, would initiate the human race through the seed of life God would put within him. Adam and his wife’s human bodies would be made up of garden soil (Gen. 2:7). Therefore, Adam’s wife’s body would be like fertile soil her husband’s seed would grow in to produce human life and start the process of procreation. Therefore,

the children created from that union would inherit the same characteristics as their parents, including any sin in them.

After careful consideration, it was mutually agreed that there was only one way that the situation could be put right. The sin of mankind would have to be paid for. Sadly, mankind would have no ability to do that himself. For sin is like a cancer. It has to be removed, or it will keep getting worse. No heavenly angel could pay that price. The price of redemption from our sin would be astronomical. Sinful mankind would not have any idea how abhorrent even a small sin would be to God or how far it would separate them from the Lord, their Creator; or how awful the consequences would be. The thought of the possibility of the rebellion of mankind was so dreadful to the Lord, He felt He had to take drastic measures to remedy the situation. If humans chose to disobey God, He would never be able to get the joy of having this new form of intelligent life that He had greatly anticipated for so long. Moreover, this new creation that He longed for, would suffer the agony of an eternity in Hell (Matthew 5:29-30, Luke 16:19-31) and the Lake of Fire (Revelation 20:15) along with the demons who mutinied against Him. It would never end. So, in order to have the joy of the new creation God had been longing for actually serve Him, drastic measures would have to take place. God the Son, our Creator, would have to become human and suffer and die an agonizing death in our place. He was the only one whose value was great enough to pay the price for the sin. Did the creation of



mankind mean enough to the Lord to go that far? Amazingly God decided it did! God had such high expectations for this creation! And Adam was created, then Eve. Everything was all set with high hopes for the best outcome! Sadly the worst possible thing happened. Adam and Eve sinned against their Creator (Genesis 3:1-24). They had children that were born with the disease of sin, and the disease was passed on from generation to generation. God, no doubt, wondered, “How could people He had blessed so much be so stupid as to betray Him?”

So how did it happen? Let’s go back to the time of the mutiny of God’s angels. The Lord had shown great kindness to them as well. There was one particular angel who was greatly blessed more than most of the others. His name was Lucifer, which means “light bearer.” God said to him, *“... You were the model of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone adorned you: ruby, topaz and emerald, chrysolite, onyx and jasper, sapphire, turquoise and beryl. Your settings and mountings were made of gold; on the day you were created they were prepared. You were anointed as a guardian cherub, for so I ordained you...”* (Ezekiel 28:12-14 NIV). However, the blessings God bestowed on him made him pompous and jealous of God. Sin didn’t exist until Lucifer invented it. Lucifer was able to influence one third of God’s angels to mutiny with him. His goal was to take over Heaven and rule all creation. After his rebellion, God changed Lucifer’s name to Satan. He is also called the dragon. As such, *“His tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky and flung them to the earth...”* (Revelation 12:4 NIV). Angels are sometimes referred to as “stars” in the Bible (Job 38:7). *“And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him”* (Revelation 12:7-9 NIV).

So, there was a population of fallen angels, called demons, living on the earth for some time before God decided to remake it. That’s probably when dinosaurs existed. **(Continued on Page 4)**

## Are You a Lukewarm Christian? (Continued From Page 3)

There is some circumstantial evidence that they had cities and a type of civilization. A trial was held regarding the mutiny. And God cremated the solid bodies of Satan and his demons as they stood there before Him. God said to Satan, *"Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor. So I threw you to the earth; I made a spectacle of you before kings. By your many sins and dishonest trade you have desecrated your sanctuaries. So I made a fire come out from you, and it consumed you, and I reduced you to ashes on the ground in the sight of all who were watching. All the nations who knew you are appalled at you; you have come to a horrible end and will be no more"* (Ezekiel 28:17-19 NIV). I have no idea how these evil angels managed to get planet earth into such a mess as they did. They could not die because they were already dead physically and spiritually. Separation from God is spiritual death.

So they will always exist somewhere, but they were not welcome in Heaven anymore. So they came up with some form of government on earth. Satan ruled over them. He had once had a throne of his own. God said that, in his defiance, Satan had said in his heart, *"... 'I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.' But you are brought down to the grave, to the depths of the pit. Those who see you stare at you, they ponder your fate: 'Is this the man who shook the earth and made kingdoms tremble, the man who made the world a desert, who overthrew its cities and would not let his captives go home?'"* (Isaiah 14:13-17 NIV). Satan and his demons will eventually spend eternity in Hell and the Lake of Fire (see Revelation 20:10). And all those who follow them and sin will spend eternity with him there.

However, God had finally achieved His goal of making man (Genesis 1:27). All that had once been Lucifer's was now Adam's. God gave control of this planet to Adam. Can you imagine how jealous that made Satan? Now God wanted to find out whether mankind would really love and obey Him when tempted. So Satan's doom was delayed, and he was used to test mankind. Adam and Eve had been given the whole earth and reign over it. Satan was in pathetic shape. He didn't even have a solid body anymore. In order to tempt Eve he had to enter into the body of a snake. Eve listened to Satan and trusted him, and Adam, who knew better (1 Timothy 2:14), followed her into sin. As a result, Adam lost it all and damned himself and all his descendants to Hell. Human life continued from generation to generation. Eventually it got so bad that *"The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. The LORD was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and His heart was filled with pain. So the LORD said, 'I will wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth—men and animals, and creatures that move along the ground, and birds of the air—for I am grieved that I have made them.' But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD"* (Genesis 6:5-8 NIV).

Despite all of this rebellion, God still had compassion on us humans. *"For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life"* (John 3:16 NIV). The Bible was published and God sent missionaries all over the world spreading the news that we

only need to humbly repent and obey Him, and we can escape the prospect of ending up in Hell and the Lake of Fire (see Revelation 20:15, 21:8) with Satan and his demons. As for those who have made this commitment, Jesus said, *"Remain in Me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in Me. I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in Me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not remain in Me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned"* (John 15:4-6 NIV). You simply cannot serve two masters, especially when they are mortal enemies (see Luke 16:13 and James 4:4).

Jesus said that in the last days before His return, there would be those who have **accepted** His redemption but have not entirely rejected the things of this world that Satan runs (1 Timothy 4:1). They want salvation but they, like Lot's wife, love the carnal things of this world. Jesus said, *"Remember Lot's wife!"* (Luke 17:32 NIV). Lot and his family were delivered from the fire and sulfur that rained upon Sodom, but Lot's wife still loved the lifestyle she had known in Sodom. And she looked back at Sodom longingly and turned into a pillar of salt (Genesis 19:26). *"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. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever"* (1 John 2:15-17 NIV).

Don't be fooled. Cleave to Christ! Just because a religious leader seem righteous doesn't mean he is (see Matthew 7:21-37). *"Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit you will recognize them..."* (Matthew 7:15-16 NIV. Also, see Act 20:28-31).

Jesus said the problem with the lukewarm church is that they *"...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. 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 3:17-20 NIV). Some of you are having a hard time right now. Things aren't working out as well as they used to. Jesus is trying to wake you up and get your attention because He loves you. If you continue to love the things of this world after accepting Christ as your Savior, you are behaving like Jesus described the five foolish virgins in Matthew 25:1-13. They weren't prepared when our Heavenly Bridegroom came for them. They didn't have the oil in their lamps, symbolic of the Holy Spirit. So they didn't have enough illumination to guide them on their way. The Bridegroom was a long time coming, and they became sleepy. *"But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with Him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut. Later the others also came. 'Sir! Sir!' they said. 'Open the door for us!' But He replied, 'I tell you the truth, I don't know you.' Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour"* (Matthew 25:1-13 NIV).

