

# CHRISTIAN WORKER

"We are workers together with Him..." (2 Corinthians 6:1)

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## "I CAN'T COME TO CHURCH BECAUSE OF COVID"

Neal Pollard

Covid has touched nearly every family I know, including my own. It would be foolish to say that it is harmless. It has claimed nearly 5 million lives as of today. So, I have heard from many good, thoughtful people, this statement: "I can't come to church because of Covid." Please accept that with deep, genuine love, there are a few questions that need to be asked alongside of this.

Are we being consistent? Are we still going to the grocery store, the restaurants, the beauty shop, the office, the classroom, the gym, and the doctor? Chances are at least as great that we will contract Covid in one of those places as at church. People are not more clean or careful in those places.

Are we properly prioritizing? Perhaps we see the stores, the job, the school, and the medical as essential and necessary. Jesus puts our spiritual health and that of His body above all else (Matt. 6:33; 16:26). How could we conclude that any of these others are more important than His kingdom?

Are we considering others? Perhaps we console ourselves by saying that we're getting what we need by watching Facebook, Vimeo, YouTube, or wherever services are live-streamed. But, worship and Bible class is not simply about our being fed. We must consider one another to stimulate unto love and good deeds (Heb. 10:24). That is said in connection with assembling together (Heb. 10:25), and how is this done by one who stays away from the assembly?

Are we weakening our spiritual strength? Is it getting easier to stay away or opt to just catch it on the phone,

computer, or TV when we don't feel like coming? Are we losing our desire to be with God's people? Isolation has many effects, some more subtle than others.

Are we assessing our fears? Those who are waiting for Covid to go away will be waiting years or longer. This is a virus. Scientists doubt that it can be eradicated. It spreads too quickly. Perhaps it will be like Polio or smallpox, but how long will that be? Will we stay home for years? Meanwhile, where will be, spiritually, years from now if we have disconnected from our spiritual family?

After 18 months, perhaps it is time to do some serious reevaluating? Instead of only allowing news outlets to be our guide, we need to balance that with careful study of God's Word. Instead of considering just this life on earth, we should balance that by considering this life is for preparing for eternity. We need to be back together—all of us, now more than ever.

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# HOW TO GIVE THANKS

Cody Westbrook

**H**ow does one express gratitude for an overwhelming gift? When the words “thank you” do not seem adequate, how can a person sincerely express their appreciation? Confronted with the same conundrum, the Psalmist put inspired pen to paper to answer this very question. Psalm 116 is a psalm of praise and thanksgiving to the Lord for His abundant benevolence. The Psalm can be divided into two parts—what God had done for the writer (vss. 1-11) and the writer’s response (vss. 12-19). Though little is known of the psalmist’s identity or background, we can be certain that he faced a very difficult circumstance from which Jehovah delivered Him. Reflecting upon His bountiful mercy prompted the psalmist to ask, “What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me” (Ps. 116:12)? In other words, “How can adequately express my gratitude to an overwhelmingly benevolent Creator?” The answer is found, not in words, but in action.

First, “I will take the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord” (Ps. 116:13). It is difficult to know exactly what the psalmist had in mind in this passage. Perhaps the reference points to the drink offering prescribed in Numbers 28:7. If this is the case then the reference is to public proclamation of praise and glory to God. Alternatively, note that the passage refers to taking something from the Lord, not giving something back to Him. Therefore, the reference may be to the idea of receiving whatever blessing God gives, with the proper attitude, and using it to His glory. Remember the sentiments of Jesus in the garden— “nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt” (Matt. 26:39). Either way, the passage makes clear that a proper response of gratitude to the Lord is to gladly submit to His will and glorify Him through word and deed (cf. Col. 3:17). Are we using the blessings God gives us to His glory? Our time? Our financial resources? Our homes? Our abilities?

Second, “I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all His people” (Ps. 116:14). The vows in question were surely those which the psalmist made

during his time of trial. Such is not an uncommon practice. Many people seek to bargain with God when they realize they are at their wits end. “God, if you will deliver me from this circumstance, I promise I will...” is a common refrain. But unlike so many, the psalmist was determined to keep his promises to the Lord, and to do so publicly. One cannot but think of Paul’s charge to Timothy to “Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses” (1 Tim. 6:12). When a person obeys the gospel they are essentially making a vow to the Lord—a profession—to live the rest of their days in His faithful service. Truly there is no better way to render thanks to God than to give Him our all (cf. Rom. 12:1-2).

Third, “I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving” (Ps. 116:17). This passage refers to the thank offerings under the Mosaic Law (Lev. 7:12-15). The psalmist would show his gratitude to God by worshipping Him. Psalm 110:4 says, “Enter into His gates with thanksgiving and into His courts with praise” (Ps. 100:4). When we assemble to worship our God, we praise and honor Him for who He is and for all of the blessings He pours out upon us. What is our mindset as we observe the actions of worship on the Lord’s Day? Are we thankful? Are we in awe of His greatness? Or, does our mind wander to mundane and carnal things?

Paul said, “In everything give thanks for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you” (1 Thess. 5:18). As we gather with family and friends this month in observance of the Thanksgiving holiday, it is imperative to remember that as Christians thanksgiving is a way of life. We are the richest people on earth and as such we should give thanks daily, not just by what we say, but by how we live.

**CW**

Second Quarter Class Schedule  
**Southwest School of Bible Studies**

November 2021-January 2021

Time	First Year	Second Year
<b>Monday</b>		
9:00-11:50	Intro to Preaching - Matt Gibson	Psalms 2 - Clay Bond
1:00-2:20	Hermeneutics 2 - Steven Lloyd	Isaiah - Matt Gibson
2:30-3:50	GSP	Greek 2 - Steven Lloyd
<b>Tuesday</b>		
9:00-11:50	Numbers - Clay Bond	Church History - Ronnie Scherffius
1:00-3:50	Luke - Ronnie Scherffius	Christian Doctrine - Faculty
<b>Wednesday</b>		
9:00-11:50	John - Steven Lloyd	Phil/Col/Phil. - Matt Gibson
1:00-2:20	Hermeneutics 2 - Steven Lloyd	GSP
2:30-3:50	GSP	Isaiah - Matt Gibson
<b>Thursday</b>		
9:00-11:50	Godhead - Steven Lloyd	Romans - Cody Westbrook
1:00-3:50	Intro to OT - Matt Gibson	GSP 1:00-2:20
	↓	Greek 2 - Steven Lloyd (2:30-3:50)
<b>Friday</b>		
9:00-11:50	Leviticus - Jeff Sweeten	1 Corinthians - Tom Moore
1:00-3:50	Rhetoric - Jeff Sweeten	Jeremiah/Lamentations - Tom Moore



Nov. 19, Financial Seminar

Nov. 14-17, Schertz Lectures

Nov. 24-26, Thanksgiving

Dec 20-Jan 2 End-of-Year Break

Jan. 17-21, Finals Week

Jan. 22-30 — Break Week

# WHAT WOULDN'T YOU DO FOR YOUR

## KIDS?

Jordan Moore

Every parent's worst nightmare is to lose their precious child. As expected, any devoted parent would do whatever it took to save their child: climb a mountain; cross a raging river; dive to the depths of the ocean. If it meant dangling from a cliff, gripping the child with one hand to keep them from falling- they would try. Were a parent to discover a climbing rope and carabiners, would they not certainly use them in their cliff-side rescue? If the authorities were to tell the parents of a hostage that were they to do just this one thing, their child's safety would be guaranteed - no matter what it was, wouldn't they try?

Without even realizing it, some parents are slowly letting their children fall from their grasp to spiritual death. If you knew that, today, there was something that you could do to save your son or daughter, wouldn't you do it? **Consider some practical things we can do now to help save our children from spiritual death:**

1. **Paint a picture.** It has been said that oftentimes a child's view of God is based on how they view their father. This ultimately should be the realization of every Christian in every relationship- that as we are called to be representations of our Lord, how we act and what we say paints a picture of God to others (Rom. 8:29). Are we careful to remind ourselves of this when with our children?
2. **Build a beautiful home.** Undoubtedly, marriages that are divided by pride, bitterness, and especially divorce have a tremendous impact on children. Let's today work on our marriages, so that it never gets to that point. Wives: live in such a submissive and holy way that your husband can't help but be a better man because of your influence (1 Pet. 3:1-6). Husbands: be understanding, show her honor, see her value in Christ, love her more than your own body, keep your eyes pure (1 Pet. 3:7; Eph. 5:28; Matt. 5:28).
3. **Provide an education.** Remember that the most important education that a child will ever receive won't come from the local school district or state university. But just as the local school district requires more than one hour or one day per week of teaching, so should parents provide a thorough Bible education for their children. It begins at home

with parents constantly teaching biblical truths and reading together from God's word (Deu. 6:7). Every effort should also be made to provide opportunity for supplemental learning in Bible classes, Gospel Meetings, devotionals, etc.

4. **Make memories, not money.** Certainly, parents are responsible for providing for the well-being of their children, which requires making a living (1 Tim. 5:8). But when our time becomes monopolized with making more money so that we can give our kids more things, we are missing out on a crucial opportunity to help our children. Regularly assembling with the church is important (Heb. 10:25). Is it not likewise important to physically be with our children? Quality time provides for relationship building and in-the-moment teaching opportunities that cannot always be taught "in the classroom." Though trips to Disneyland are fun, don't underestimate the value of a seemingly mundane evening spent with your children away from the phone and off the computer.
5. **Leave a legacy.** Whether good or bad, the parenting that we do today will affect generations to come. Realize that we are involved in a very similar effort to what Paul was encouraging Timothy be involved in: teaching the Gospel to others so that they might be able to teach others also (2 Tim. 2:2). The parenting that our grandchildren and great-grandchildren will receive will very likely reflect the parenting that we practice, today.

Ultimately, each child makes their own decisions about their spiritual walk (Heb. 11:24-25). But just as the local shepherds are responsible for the local sheep, and will be judged accordingly (Heb. 13:17), so too should parents recognize the grave responsibility and awesome opportunity before them to shape and mold the precious souls that God has entrusted to their care.

CW



# HE CAME DOWN FROM THE MOUNTAIN, BUT NOT THE CROSS

Tom Wacaster

If the Sermon on the Mount were all that Matthew recorded, that small piece of inspired literature would declare the very majesty of the One Who spoke those words. The sermon now complete, our Lord leaves the mountain to enter His market place. The very first words we encounter as we enter the eighth chapter of Matthew capture our attention: “And when he was come down from the mountain” (8:1). Strictly speaking those half dozen English words describe His descent from an earthly mountain to the plains below. But suppose Jesus had stayed in the mountain? What if He had built some monastery and lived out His life on isolation? Had He done so, the miracles in this chapter, yea the whole of Matthew, would have never been recorded, and the teachings and instructions delivered on the mount would have been nothing more than the wisdom of just another Rabbi speaking to His band of devoted zealots who, at the end of their lifelong journey, would have summed up the experience in the words of the two men traveling to Emmaus: “But we hoped that it was he who should redeem Israel” (Luke 24:21). Thank God that Jesus did come down from that mountain! Consider the following.

## **He Came Down From The Mountain Of Happiness To Bear Our Sorrows**

Each of the three miracles of healing in this portion of our study is vitally connected with that beautiful chapter of the Suffering Servant in Isaiah 53. Matthew told us these things were done “that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through Isaiah the prophet, saying: Himself took our infirmities, and bare our diseases” (8:17). The Old Testament passage is Isaiah 53:4-6: “Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.” “Griefs” and “sorrows” – pay attention to those two words, keeping in mind the context of Isaiah’s prophecy. The sorrow to which Isaiah refers was deeper and more profound than the emotional ache in the hearts of men that might arise from time to time. The Suffering Servant did not come to open a grief-counseling center or to wipe the tears of those whose lives had been disrupted by physical disease and multiple maladies, and then go about business as usual.

Our Lord was fully aware that back of all the disease and suffering is the problem of sin. The true sorrow of the world

can be traced to sin, whether a person’s own individual sin or the sin of humanity. Sin was introduced into the world by Adam (Rom. 5:12-21), and it spread into every corner of this globe and to every successive generation by individual choice. Jesus’ power to heal the leper by the touch of His hand, or to heal the centurion’s servant from a distance by His spoken word, finds its significance in His overall mission to “seek and to save that which is lost” (Luke 19:10). Was this not the point in the case of the man sick of the palsy where Jesus asked His critics: “Which is easier, to say, Thy sins are forgiven thee; or to say, Arise and walk?” (Luke 5:23). When it is said that Jesus bore “our griefs, and carried our sorrows” (Isa. 53:4) it is heaven’s way of telling us of the great mission of our King to address the root cause of those sorrows. He did this by being “wounded for our transgressions” and “bruised for our iniquities” (Isa. 53:5). Can you imagine a king who would be willing to pay the penalty for the crimes of the citizens of his kingdom? Pick your dictator or despot, and the story is the same. It is most often the case that the innocent suffer for the crimes of the king. But our King came down from the mount of happiness to bear our sorrows.

## **He Came Down From The Mountain Of Honor To Become A Servant**

Prior to His descent to this world of woe, our Lord enjoyed honor and majesty alongside the Father. He basked in heavenly sunshine, and was worshiped by the angels (Heb. 1:6). He enjoyed the “power, and riches, and wisdom, and might, and honor, and glory, and blessing” (Rev. 5:12) deserving of the Godhead. Existing in the “form of God,” He “counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped” (Phil. 2:6). Words cannot be found that can adequately describe the majesty of our Lord prior to that moment when He took upon Himself “the form of a servant, [and] being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross” (Phil. 2:7-8). His descent from that ‘mountain of honor’ was for no other purpose than to be a Servant of God and humanity, and to give His life a ransom for all. “For the Son of man also came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45). On one occasion He washed the feet of the disciples thereby teaching them the importance of being a servant (John 13:1-15). He was obedient to the Father in every respect, remaining faithful even unto death.

In the thirty-three years that our Lord sojourned upon this earth, He never once demonstrated a single shred of selfish desire; never seeking to “be served” but seeking rather “to serve.” He never had to turn His back on material

things because He never sought them in the first place. On one occasion his disciples encouraged Him to eat, but He said unto them, “I have meat to eat that ye know not. My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to accomplish his work” (John 4:32-34). He then warned all of us, “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust doth consume, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth consume, and where thieves do not break through and steal” (Matt. 6:19-20). He not only preached that message, but lived that message to its fullest extent. Our Lord never owned any property, never built a house, never lay by in store, never had a passbook savings account, never organized a “garage sale,” and never placed an ounce of importance on what one might possess in this life. When His life was finished and His course completed, the only thing He could call His own was stripped from His sinless body and gambled away at the foot of the cross by the Roman soldiers while their Master and Creator hung on the cross close by. Having no place to lay His head (Luke 9:58), He found His rest in the homes of those who were gracious enough to provide His daily sustenance, and grant Him a place of repose when the day was done. All this, because He was willing to come down from the mountain of honor to become a Servant!

### **He Came Down From The Mountain of Heaven To Be Our Savior**

Prior to His incarnation, Jesus shared in the glories of heaven with the Father. He basked in the glory and essence of deity (2 Cor. 8:9). In the beginning He filled the universe with the stars and planets (John 1:1-3) with the simple sound of His voice. He sustained (and still sustains) all things by the word of His power (Heb. 1:3). Yet He was willing to give all that up so that He could set before mankind the feast of abundant life. The New Testament rings with the message of salvation: “Faithful is the saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners” (1 Tim. 1:15a). “And she shall bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name Jesus; for it is he that shall save his people from their sins” (Matt. 1:21). W.N. Clarke wrote almost a century ago, “The glory of Christianity is salvation.” The great challenge to the church in this century is getting men to realize their need for a Savior. Too many have lost the awareness of this need; too few are inclined to perceive of Him as Savior. One reason for this is the diminished concept of sin in the modern world. Jack Cottrell wrote,

Of course he recognizes that the world is filled with evils, failures, social ills, and conflicts of all kinds; but he just does not want to think of them as sin. This is because sin connotes a wrongdoing for which one is responsible before

God, and modern man does not want to see himself in this light. He will take his evil and his failures to sociologists and psychologists, but not to God (Cottrell, 268).

When our “problems” are discussed in social circles they may be described as “disgraceful,” “corrupt,” “prejudicial,” “harmful,” or even “evil,” but never “sinful.” It is obvious that without a sense of sin there can be no real sense of God as our Savior.

### **Conclusion**

Yes, Jesus came down from the mountain of happiness to bear our sorrows. He came down from the mountain of honor to be a Servant. He came down from the mountain of heaven to be our Savior. When the mob cried for the blood of Jesus, they were granted their wicked desires. And while Jesus hung on the cross they taunted the Son of God and challenged Him to “come down from the cross” (Matt. 27:40). He could have; but He refused to do so. Thank God that while Jesus was willing to come down from the mountain, He refused to come down from the cross

**CW**

The graphic features a photograph of a passport from the Southwest School of Bible Studies, Austin, Texas, with a date stamp of SEP 30 1978. Below the passport, the text reads: "your PASSPORT to prepare for the ministry". At the bottom, it says "swsbs.edu Austin, Texas" and includes a QR code.

# THE SCIENCE AGAINST ITSELF

Pat McIntosh

If we were to discuss creation and the existence of God with a friend who believed in the Bible, we would turn to obvious biblical passages such as Gen. 1:1 and John 1:1-3. Those passages clearly reflect the existence of God and the roles of the Godhead in the creation process. The very first verse of the Bible clearly affirms the existence of God. The remainder of the Bible is built upon and substantiates that opening affirmation of God's existence.

If we were to have the same discussion with someone who did not share our belief in the inspired word, a different approach would have to be taken. Those who believe in evolution claim that science "disproves" the existence of God and "proves" that evolution is the process through which all things came to exist. In reality, "true" science supports the biblical view of God's existence and creation. No, it does not do so by name. It does do so, however, in principle. Let us look at a couple of examples from scientific laws.

The first example we will consider is that the Law of Cause and Effect. The law of cause and effect indicates that "every effect must have an adequate and antecedent cause." If you were to walk into your kitchen and notice a vase full of flowers on the table, you would not assume that they mere appeared there. The law of cause and effect would indicate that something with adequate ability would have placed the flowers there before you walked in and saw them. Hence, the existence of the universe is evidence of a being with adequate ability "placing" (creating) the universe before placing man there. The fact that man exists is evidence of the same law of science. The Bible calls the "adequate being" God.

A second argument that can be made from a secular perspective (but is a scriptural one as well) is the fact that "design demands a designer." This argument is similar to if not a subset of the previous argument and likewise indicates a supreme supernatural source for the existence of the universe. A simplified explanation for the evolutionary arguments is that life began from a basic molecular form and evolved into the complicated systems of our universe today. Even basic secular illustrations show the fallacy of this line of argumentation. Many of us wear watches. If we would remove the watch from our wrist, remove the back, and observe we would notice the power behind this illustration. Looking inside the watch we will find gears, springs, dials and other equipment all assembled in such a

way that, for the most part, these watches keep good time. The argument that things "just happened that way" would be similar to saying that a watch was produced by a tornado moving through a wrecking yard and simply "spitting out a functioning watch." The watch itself serves as a witness that something capable of designing such a piece of equipment did so before we had the opportunity to purchase it.

When we observe the universe, we see a complicated system with an all but enumerable number of parts. Yet, we see it operate with amazing precision and consistency. We can launch a rocket from the earth and send it to the moon. Yes, numerous calculations are made, but are made based upon the order of the universe. The earth's orbit around the sun determines our seasons, and that order just happens to be perfect.

Whether we are arguing from secular scientific arguments or analyzing the inspired Scriptures, the evidence points to a Creator, a source capable of producing the universe. May our faith continue to grow, not from the secular arguments, but from the Scriptures which attest to God's power, omniscience, and eternity. The mysteries and majesty of the universe attest to the glory of the God of heaven (Ps. 19:1).

CW



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Note: I am well aware that there are those who are immunocompromised and cannot attend. This is not in any way meant to discourage or dishearten those in this condition. God knows and understands.

CW



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## From the Director's desk



**Steven Lloyd**  
Director SWSBS

**T**he second quarter of the school year commenced November 1, 2021. The second quarter is one of the more challenging due to the number of holiday breaks for lectureships and holidays. (I think it is one of the students' favorite quarters.)

As anyone who reads this update knows, two of our faculty members moved on to other works. It is a challenge finding others to take their place, but we have invited a number of men to join the faculty to teach a course or two each quarter. Brothers Stan Crowley, Mel Hutzler, Tom Moore and Jeff Sweeten have already joined us to fill in the gaps, and we are considering a few more men to help complete the year.

Financial support for faculty has been provided by the Southwest congregation for decades—and still is, but times have changed. The needs have changed. We have two full-time faculty members. Our current Associate Director, brother Clay Bond, is part-time, but puts countless hours into the work every week overseeing the financial aspects of student support and teaching each quarter. We also have other men traveling in to teach. The help you have given us in the past is appreciated. We could not have done it without you