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WORDS FOR LIVING MINISTRIES

To Encourage... To Inform... To Teach

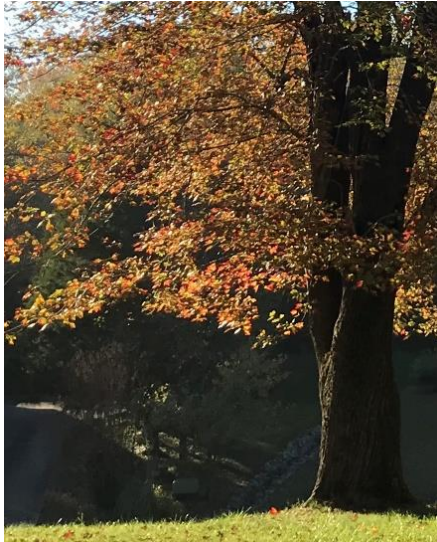
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Dear Ones,

This issue is going out late because of Sally's heavy work load, made heavier since Marty's death, and because of my slow moving. We are what is left of the "newsletter staff."



Ah, but the weather at the farm is beautiful: leaves turning and beginning to fall, cool nights, sunny and warm days--in a word, pleasant. The ancient wild pecan by the house is dumping its brown leaves on the brick walk so deeply that they must be raked off in order to walk safely. The big cypress trees are bare. They have dropped their delicate, feathery leaves, but they are never a problem--they seem to disappear into the grass. We are blessed.

God is so very good to us!

Prologue.

Now, there are some things that I must tell you.

From the very birth of this ministry 43 years ago, we have functioned under the restriction of two inalterable, unchanging matters of policy: (1) that, except for secretarial employees, everyone who works in the ministry, beginning with me, works without pay; and (2) that we will never ask for money.

Some of you will remember that in my teaching sessions I never allowed an offering to be taken; but, after much urging from those attending, I allowed a

basket or bucket to be quietly placed by the exit for those who wished to give.

At the very beginning I told the Lord that I would continue this work as long as I am able, and as long as He provides the money. These policies will remain in force, unaltered, until the money runs out and we have to close the door.

However, since I know that you all would want to know; and since we are, in effect, the Words for Living family (albeit a very large family), there are some realities that I think I should share with you. In recent times, in order to continue publishing, we have had to economize by reducing the quality of the newsletter paper and, at times, we're faced with having to reduce the size / length.

Why am I telling you all this? It is because we love you, you are part of the family, and we believe that you deserve to know. After all, this ministry wouldn't exist without you.

--Tom

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And now, let's enjoy some good old Bible teaching.

The Holy Trinity

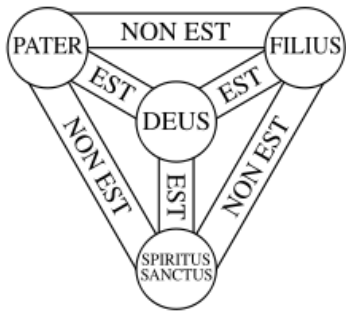
God's own Divine Being is a Trinity--the Holy Trinity--consisting of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. And godly men have struggled, trying to understand it, for 2,000 years.

It is what theologians wisely call a "holy mystery." This simply means that God's existing in three parts, yet the three parts are one Being, is an infinite concept; and we, his creations, have only limited, finite minds¹. We can believe it--we must believe it--but we can never fully understand it. Thus, God knows and understands everything--we don't. We're just not built that way.

I believe that man's best attempt at expressing the mystery of the Holy Trinity is what is called the Trinity

¹ "Finite" is derived from the Latin word *finitus*, meaning limited. Its opposite, "infinite" is derived from the Latin word *infinitus*, meaning without limits (the *in* means without).

Cross. My favorite version is the ancient Latin version below.



Yes, it is written in Latin; but don't worry--the Latin is simple. (1) Pater is Father (2) Filius, is Son (3) Spiritus Sanctus, is Holy Spirit (4) Est is, Is (5) Non Est is, Is not (6) and Deus, is God.

And so, it says that the Father is not the Son; and the Son is not the Holy Spirit; and the Holy Spirit is not the Father. Yet the father, Son and Holy Spirit are all "Deus"--God. I love this logical construction; I have it, framed, on my study wall.

I hope you now have a better understanding of the Holy Trinity, and that is as far as we need to go.

So now, let's deal with the trinity of man.

The Trinity of Man

God seems to enjoy creating things in threes. He created Heaven in three Levels and seems to dwell in the Third Level (II Corinthians 12:2). He designed his Temple in three parts: Outer Court; Holy Place; and Holy of Holies (of course we already knew this).

But perhaps our Triune God would consider his most important three-part creation to be you and me. He wanted real children, created in his image.

The Hebrew of the Old Testament does not reveal the trinity of man. The Greek of the New Testament, however, reveals it in many places, most clearly in Paul's farewell to the church at Thessalonica (I Thes 5:23).

The Greek of the New Testament also tells us the names of the three parts, and makes clear their functions.

1. Spirit - in Greek, "*pneuma*." It can mean spirit, breath or wind, depending on how it is used. Our human spirit is the very essence of us--the true us--and it gives the body and soul life (James 2:26). Our human spirit is somewhere in the center of us, and at the very moment that it leaves the body, taking with it the soul, the body is dead.

2. Soul - in Greek, "*psuche*." In Greek there is no "y" sound so, when we borrow the Greek and create an English word, we replace the upsilon with a "Y" and it becomes "psyche." It is our brain, our personality--the thing that makes each of us unique.

3. Body - in Greek, *soma*. It means exactly that--the body--that physical container for the spirit and the soul. Of the three parts, this is the easiest to grasp.

The Common Misunderstanding.

The common, almost universal, misunderstanding about this is that people--the redeemed and the unredeemed--think we are composed of only two parts: body and soul. They could not be more wrong--or more deprived by failing to understand this fundamental truth².

--Tom

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Revelation:

Some Facts About John's Great Book



Photo by Patrick Fore on UnSplash

What the Book Is.

The book is, as the Glorified Christ commanded, simply a record of what John **Saw** and **Heard** as he sat in his lonely cave. It is not what he thought about it, or his interpretations of it--just what he **saw** and **heard**. It is God's great **revealing** of the way that his plans and purposes for his creation will be completed and finalized, and if there are some things that we don't understand, we will as they actually take place.

The Greek word translated "revelation" in the ancient manuscripts is "*apokalypsis*" and it means "a revealing, an uncovering, the removing of a veil."

In simplest terms Revelation is the revealing of God's final plan for completely cleansing his creation of sin and of the misery that sin produces. This will be culminated by the ultimate happy ending when Satan, "the god of this world," his evil kingdom and plans, will be forever destroyed and we joyful believers will be reunited with our loved ones in a sinless paradise like the Garden of Eden--forever.

What the Book Is Not.

At the beginning it is vitally important that we lay aside any fears or other negative feelings that we may have about John's great book because of what we have heard or read about Revelation.

It is **not** a book of mysteries to be solved, or horror stories to trouble and frighten us! To the contrary, it is a book of exciting revelations, experienced by a very human man, a man just like you and me, who was

² In my growing up years there was even a very popular love song with that uninformed title, "Body and Soul." I can still sing it.

thrilled--and sometimes overwhelmed--by the things that he saw, heard and experienced³.

Revelation Was Last.

Revelation, last book of the Bible, was also the last to be accepted by the Church Fathers as inspired. This was largely due to its mystical content. It was finally accepted, and the Canon was closed, at the Council of Carthage in 397 AD, exactly 300 years after John put it in writing.

The Importance of the Books of Ezekiel and Daniel.

The books of Ezekiel and Daniel are companion sources in the study of the End Times; we might think of the books of Ezekiel, Daniel and Revelation as the End Times Trilogy.

Some believe that Revelation cannot be understood without Ezekiel and Daniel; but I suggest that Ezekiel and Daniel cannot be fully understood without Revelation.

Revelation is the capstone book of the entire Bible.

The Traditional Approach.

For about 100 years the dominant trend in the study of Revelation has been the study of **interpretations** of the book--what scholars think it means--and not the study of the book itself.

Study Bibles and popular Christian books, with their time lines, charts, drawings, imaginary events and characters, have dominated the literature until most Christians think they are facts. They aren't. They are just ideas.

Some Things about Revelation that May Surprise You.

1. There is no such person in the Book of Revelation as "the Antichrist."
2. In fact, the word "antichrist" does not even appear in the book of Revelation--not even once.
3. The word "antichrist" appears only five times in the entire Bible, and all five are all in the 1st and 2nd Epistles of John. And, in all five appearances, the word is never a proper noun--not an individual evil person's name or title--with the definite article, "the" and a capital "A," who rules the World⁴. No, in all five occurrences it is just **a type of sinner or sin**--denying that Jesus is the Christ, or denying that Jesus came in the flesh.
And, in I John 2:18 where it says "you have heard that antichrist will come," in the same verse it says "even now there are many antichrists...." Check it out and give it some thought.
4. The word "Armageddon" appears only once in the Bible (Rev. 16:16), and it is not necessarily speaking of

³ I know people who love the rest of the Bible but have never read Revelation because they are afraid to! They have been exposed to the confusing interpretations, paraphrases and books which have become the "in" way to interpret Revelation today; but they have not been exposed to the book itself and what it simply says.

a climactic battle that defeats the forces of evil with uncountable dead, and finally settles things on the Earth. It is just a place--a low hill--in northern Israel, southwest of the Sea of Galilee, overlooking the Valley of Jezreel, where in the end times the kings of the earth shall gather⁵. Whether the battle of verse 14 takes place there and whether there is only one battle is much less clear. In ancient times the hill had a small country town at its base; the town vanished long ago.

If You Would Like to Know More

If you would like to know more about Revelation, contact me at tomcmck@gmail.com and I will send you the entire Study Guide to Revelation. --Tom

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Food for Thought—Perfect Love Casts Out Fear



Photo by [Bart LaRue](#) on [Unsplash](#)

There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear; because fear hath torment.... I John 4:18

This verse is one that is familiar to many of us, but what does it mean? How exactly does love drive out fear? Whose love for whom?

Many people point out that the love of our Lord which led Him to the cross for us saves us and that when we come to understand and take hold of this, then we can be released from the fear of hell (as well as hell itself). And that is true. I think this passage is talking about even more, however. I think it speaks to the effect love has on all fears.

How true it is, by the way, that fear *torments* us. And this passage is a good reminder that our Enemy is not just a comic character dressed up in a red suit trying to lure us into saloons. *Fear hath torment*. Satan is pleased

⁴ In the modern versions of the Greek New Testament, and in the modern version of the Bible based on them, in I and II John, the word "the" has been added so that "antichrist" in them reads "the antichrist," which is terribly misleading.

⁵ The Hebrew word rendered "Armageddon" in Revelation is *har megiddo* and it means "hill of megiddo."

when we feel tormented by fear—he *likes* it. THAT is evil. That tells us what sort of enemy we have.

Joyce Meyer has written well about how her experiences of abuse as a child ingrained fear in her—fear of being hurt, fear of being let down, fear that there was nobody she could depend upon to care about her and look out for her. And that fear, as fear always does, robbed her. As an adult, she was afraid to let people get close to her, she tried to control everything and everyone in her life (in an effort to avoid being hurt or disappointed), she worried about her finances constantly, and she was miserable. It was only when she finally became convinced that God really did love her that she was able to experience freedom from these fears and the bad fruit they produced in her life.

I think there is even more, however. Not only is God's love important, but the love we exercise is vital as well. I John 4 is full of cosmic truth, and another thing it says is that as Jesus behaved in the world, so are we to behave. And what did Jesus do? He loved. He loved the Father. He loved mankind. And I find that it is loving God and loving people which can free us from many fears. Who in scripture was brave? Shadrack, Meshack, and Abednego are great examples. They believed God would deliver them from the fire but said that even if He didn't deliver them, they would still not bow down to any other god. How were they able not to be afraid when threatened with tortuous death by fire? They believed God was real (not just an emblem of their cultural traditions, but real), that He cared what they did, and that He was good—a God they could love, a God worth dying for. What about Esther? Faith in a God who was real (otherwise there would've been no prayer and fasting before she asked to have an audience with the king) and love for her people. Let's look at Jesus Himself: Hebrews 12 tells us that Jesus endured the cross (and counted the worldly shame of it as worth nothing) because of "the joy that was set before him" upon which He fixed his eyes. What was that joy? As best as I can discern, it was the joy of knowing what He would be accomplishing for us (and that it would also please the Father). His love for us and for the Father drove out fear and replaced it with joy.

When I think of my own fears, I find that love is the cure for them. What am I afraid of? Here's one—being in a situation in which I'd have to try to fit in with the country club set. Notice that fear is always inward. It's about me. What will happen to me? How will this make

me feel? How will I compare with them? Love, however, is outward. If I remember, "Hey, every one of these ladies has hard things in her life. I know this because *every* person does. Instead of feeling insecure, I need to be thinking about the fact that they are carrying burdens, just like I am, and I need to pray for them," then the fear vanishes. The focus becomes outward as I begin to think and act in love toward the women I'd before been afraid of. Here is another--What if something went badly financially and I were to lose my house? You may be surprised, but my most comforting, fear-repelling thought is this: "Well, if that happened, I would learn what that is like. Many people experience this. If it happened to me, it would at least open my eyes more fully to them. I would never (I hope) thereafter forget to pray for them, and for refugees and others in even worse straits." That perspective hacks away a lot of my fear. The focus goes away from me to others, and it makes me think of God's value system—the value of the kingdom of heaven truly outweighing the kingdom of this world.

I think unforgiveness often has a component of fear within it. We want someone to remember and care that we were hurt; and perhaps some part of us suspects that the only way to do that is to keep hanging on to the pain ourselves in case no one else remembers it. I recall a time when I was finding it difficult to forgive someone. The person in this case didn't even seem to feel bad about what she'd done. That made it harder for me to let go. Then I felt the Lord speak to me, saying, "Can you forgive her for my sake? " And I thought, "Wow. Yes, I *can* let go of it for *You!*" To think that there would be anything I could do that would bless the Lord! To think that there is anything we can do that would make Him actually *happy/pleased* (and I think He was telling me it would)! Yes, I *could* do it *for Him*. And immediately the pain and connected fear dissolved.

No wonder love drives fear out. There's not room for fear in love.

--Sally

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A FINAL WORD

Treasure and use each day as if it were your last, and never give up hope: God has a limitless supply of new beginnings, and He makes beautiful things out of broken pieces.

