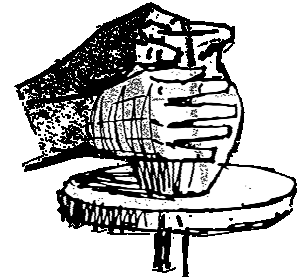


His Workmanship: Westside

"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works."

—Ephesians 2:10



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Isaiah 64:8

Things Hoped For, by Shane Scott

"Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen," Heb 11:1. For the original recipients of the Book of Hebrews, there is something very specifically to be hoped for that faith assures—something specifically unseen for which faith provides "*conviction,*" "*substance,*" or "*assurance.*" That something is "*what is promised*" by God, Heb 10:36, *the "great reward"* that awaits those who live by faith, 10:35-36, the eternal home that is a "*better possession*" than mere earthly goods, 10:34. But the Hebrew Christians did not see that reward at the moment. Instead, they saw suffering. This wasn't the first time. Previously in their experience as Christians they had experienced verbal and physical afflictions—"*joyfully,*" in fact, 10:34. But something was different this time around. They were sluggish, 5:11, they were struggling, 12:4, 12, and some had already started to abandon the gatherings of Christ's people, 10:25. Clearly, the author of this "*word of exhortation,*" 13:22, is gravely concerned about the possibility of wholesale renunciation of the good confession, knowing the terrifying judgment that awaits the person who abandons faith in Christ, 10:26-31. But he doesn't intend for them to be among those who "*shrink back and are destroyed, but of those*

who have faith and preserve their souls," 10:39. But what does that

kind of faith look like?

That's what Hebrews 11 is designed to explain. The writer says that enduring faith is faith that trusts in the power and honesty of God to keep His promises. After all, what is a promise of God but an unseen reality? As you look at the list of people in Heb 11, there are several obvious instances of seeing the unseen, of seeing through the eye of faith. Noah was warned "*concerning events as yet unseen,*" 11:7. Abraham was called to a place "*not knowing where he was going,*" 11:8. Joseph spoke about the "*exodus of the Israelites*" hundreds of years before it happened, 11:22. Moses's parents "*saw he was no ordinary child,*" 11:23. Moses was "*looking to the reward,*" 11:26, and "*endured as seeing Him Who is invisible,*" 11:27.

But as we wait for God's promise, there is a price to be paid. The question facing the Hebrew Christians was, "*Is this price worth it?*" Was it going to be worth it to face another round of slander and reproach? To be stigmatized as outsiders? To bear the brunt of another wave of violent persecution? To pay the ultimate price of death itself?

In this light, notice how many outsiders there are in Hebrews 11. Noah's behavior was so non-conformist it "*condemned the world*" he lived in, 11:7.

Abraham and his family were "*strangers and exiles on the earth,*" 11:13. Joseph died in Egypt and requested to be buried back home, 11:22. Moses rejected his Egyptian upbringing, "*choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God,*" 11:25, an act the writer connects with the "*reproach of Christ,*" 11:26. Even a Canaanite prostitute was led to become an outsider to her own people because of faith, 11:31.

The choice to trust in God has always carried a price. The stigma, shame, and even violence threatening the Jewish Christians addressed in this letter were nothing new. But the legacy of faith provided by the stories in Hebrews 11 also reveals that God can overcome all obstacles that threaten His people, even the gravest threat of all, death. Righteous Abel still speaks through his faith "*though he died,*" 11:4. Enoch "*was taken up so that he should not see death,*" 11:5. Abraham was "*as good as dead,*" 11:12, yet from him God produced innumerable descendants. Abraham reasoned that when God commanded him to offer Isaac He "*was able even to raise him from the dead,*" 11:19. As the list of the faithful reaches its crescendo, 11:35 says, "*Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a better life.*" And the greatest example of faithful endurance overcoming death

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Things Hoped For, from p. 1

is Jesus: *“the founder and perfecter of our faith, Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God,”* 12:2.

Jesus endured on the basis of God’s promise to seat Him at His right hand, and Jesus received that promise. The faith that the author of this letter called his readers to, and calls us to, is the same commitment to trust in God, to endure, knowing that we will receive what God has promised us. Abraham *“was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God,”* 11:10. It is *“a better country, that is, a heavenly one,”* 11:16. In one of the most majestic passages in the New Testament, he describes it in detail:

“But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel,” 12:22-24.

Do you see this *“city that is to come,”* 13:14? This city is what we hope for, the object of hope that faith assures us exists; this *“heavenly Jerusalem”* is the unseen reality that faith convicts us is more real than any earthly city. This is the city where those who suffer shame and reproach can dwell forever with the One Who is *“not ashamed to be called their God,”* 11:16, saved through the death of the One *“not ashamed to call them brothers,”* 2:11.

Several of this church are suffering from cancer and in very serious condition. A friend and sister in TX just received news that her cancer has spread, and there is not much more that can be done for her medically. My great desire is that none of these loved ones was suffering from this horrible disease—just as the Hebrew Christians desired that they did not have to face

the trials, and even death, that confronted them. But God’s word to His people in the first century and the 21st century is to trust Him, knowing that confidence in Him will have a *“great reward,”* 10:35. And the greatest reward of all is God Himself.

People Can Change, by J.F. Dancer, Jr
Often when talking to older people about their need to obey the gospel, I get the response, *“I’m just too old to try to change the way I have been living.”* In former days they used the proverb, *“you can’t teach an old dog new tricks.”* It is easy to make excuses when we don’t really want to do something.

However, I read an interesting article in a newspaper that told of a woman in Tennessee being baptized at the age of 104. She began studying the Bible with her niece. (More of us should have private studies with our relatives, Acts 8:4.) In the same issue there was a story of a man in Texas who was baptized at the age of 107. So older folks do make changes in their lives.

I’m not suggesting anyone wait until after they reach 100 to obey the gospel. We have no way of knowing if we will even be alive tomorrow, Jas 4:13-15, or whether we will still have a clear mind. We need to understand, as Paul taught the Corinthians, that *“today is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation,”* 2 Cor.6:2. God has not promised us that we will live until we reach 100 years. He has not even promised that we will live to tomorrow.

But He does teach us that we should *“number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom,”* Ps 90:12, and that we should *“walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise,”* Eph 5:15. We need to understand that a person who is *“wise”* in the sight of God is one who learns the teaching of Jesus, takes this teaching seriously, and obeys it, Mt 7:24. The one whom God considers a *“fool”* is the person who, after hearing and understanding the teaching of Jesus, refuses to obey, Mt 7:26. Each of us decides if

God will call us *“wise”* or *“foolish.”*

Being older before obeying the gospel may make it harder to *“put off the old man with his deeds”* and *“put on the new man,”* Col.3:9-10, because our old habits may be entrenched, but with God’s grace it can be done. All people, regardless of age, have to make changes in our thinking, our speech, and in our lifestyles when we come to Christ. Some changes will be easy, others will be very difficult, but they can be made. Let none of us ever say that we are *“too old to begin making changes”* in the way we live. Jesus died that we might be forgiven, Heb 2:9, and by His power we can live as He wills, Phil 4:13.

Online Commo, by Lawrence Kelley

Change is nothing new. Today, technology changes so quickly that even the most interested techno geek has trouble keeping up. As Christians, we have to look at technology as a friend and opportunity while not being gullible about its dangers. There are no passages that pop on my PC Bible when I run searches for Facebook, Twitter, Blog, or email. But this does not mean the Bible has nothing to say in regard to how we make use of them. These are basically tools of communication and that means that everything the Bible says about righteous communication applies here.

The opportunities to communicate well are greatly enhanced by these tools, and the dangers for sins of the tongue are also multiplied. Mild, soft-spoken individuals are capable of flaming out in an email in ways they never would have done before. We can easily give way to gossip. We can hide behind the anonymity of the internet and do untold mischief. The exhortation is to *“Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth (keyboard), but what is good for necessary edification that it may impart grace to the hearers (readers),”* Eph 4:29. Thomas Jefferson said to count to 10 before speaking—that goes at least double (more than 20) before posting/texting.



Psalm 133:1

God makes my heart clean in 2015 “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.” —Ps 51:10

Liar, Liar, from p. 4

What we discovered is this: the White House and Clinton knew that the Benghazi attack was the premeditated work of Islamic terrorists before the bodies were cold. She and the administration nevertheless proceeded to spread a falsehood that advanced the president's preferred political narrative just 6 weeks before a tightly-contested election.

Remember, in the aftermath of the Benghazi attack, the Obama White House used the video lie to launch a national conversation on the limits of free speech. Obama even went to the U.N. and before the whole world put our free-speech rights on trial. Blaming America, specifically our attachment to the First Amendment, is a much easier conversation for this White House—and the media that covers for it—than its unpreparedness and ineptitude in the face of Islamic terrorism.

If George W. Bush and Condoleezza Rice had instantly blamed a terrorist attack on a video and then it was revealed they deliberately lied about it to win reelection, newsrooms across this country would be aflame in outrage. What is the response when the same fact pattern applies to the Obama and Clinton? “Meh.” That is not a paraphrase. That was literally the response of Glenn Thrush, Politico's chief political correspondent. The press just sees Democrat politicians as normal and middle Americans as “the other.” The Clintons have been brilliant at exploiting this. Social circles of the elite press and Democrat politicians overlap almost completely. Friends work for

Discipleship Here At Home

Democrats, and spouses or former colleagues become media peers. Vast networks of them rely on the Clintons one way or another. They become corrupted by it, in large ways and small. That's why I keep saying “lie” and “liar” in regard to the Clintons. No one should get away with the idea that the Clintons are just like other politicians or that what they've done isn't lying. People wince when you call Hillary a liar, but liar she is.

The Benghazi Committee is owed a public debt if only because it has exposed the decay in Washington's culture of wagon-circling. While news media and Democrats are praising Clinton's performance, Americans are waking up to the notion that they were deliberately misled about the deaths of their fellow citizens in a terror attack and the lies were likely for petty political gain. There is something rotten here—the stink of lies; Pr 10:18; 13:5; 21:6; 26:28.

Words Matter, by David Whitney

One of the most powerful of Satan's tools is language. Conquering armies used to take control of and ultimately change the language used by the people being conquered. You may have heard of the outrageous applications of this, even on college campuses where free speech is outlawed except in limited physical zones called free speech zones. Consider the irony of that, an institution supposedly devoted to learning and vigorous debate on issues admits that free speech is dead—submit to indoctrination or be expelled.

Political correctness is the imposition of lies by means of forbidding the use of some words and the redefinition of other words. Social engineers understand that for most people if certain words are forbidden and other words redefined then many will no longer think about the ideas connected to the forbidden words or the old definition of words. For example, what first comes to your mind when you hear the word “gay”? The old definition of that word is “merry, airy, jovial, sportive.”

PRAY FOR healing, protection, help

- **Anita Charo**—recovering from eye surgery
- **Sandra Perry**—diabetes complications; oxygen
- **Tracy Corray**—broken bone in foot; boot
- **Judy Sartin**—virus and cough
- **Judy Strand**—preparing for liver transplant by chemo drugs; also broken arm, post-surgery pain
- **Sheryle McNeill**—pinched nerve
- **Ernesto Gonzalez's father Fidencio**—stage IV lymphoma, some improvement after 2nd chemo
- **Linda Szymanski's grandson Slade**—broke elbow
- **Letha Fink's brother Kenneth Morrison** of GA—liver disease, diagnosed with neuro-muscular disease
- **Kaylee Chavez**—age 10, cancer; has rallied well; treatments at St. Jude's in Memphis through Nov
- **Bill Dennis**—home recovery following rehab
- **Larry Campbell's FL partner Terry Hargadine's wife Michelle**—cancerous lymph nodes removed, latest scan shows improvement; picc line inserted for chemo
- **Kayla Knighten, Christine Adams's daughter**, needs our prayers; **Judy Strand** requests prayer for her son **Joe**; pray **Ed's son Rodney Schulz** and **Sheryle's daughter Tiffany** receive the gospel; pray **Jeff** and **Pat's son Mike** and grandson **Drew** return to God.
- **Sandra Perry's daughter Naomi** was recently in a car accident; granddaughter **Katie Redden** has a broken arm; son-in-law **Donald Redden** is on dialysis; his mother suffered cuts in collision.
- **Sylvia Chapman, Brett's grandmother**—third stage pancreatic cancer; **Brett's grandmother Sue**, and Aunt **Bonnie Doss**—cancer returned
- **Brittany Tope's mother**—breast cancer, improving; grandmother—on dialysis

CHRONIC CONDITIONS

- Christian Harrod; Addison Tope; Pat Wilkes; Ann Cox; Logan Corray; Rocco Jr.**—asthma
- Orchid Cox**—chronic blood clot condition
- Autumn Hadders**—epilepsy; celiac disease
- Kirk Johnson**—MS
- Menards**—**Lloyd** diabetes, Alzheimers; VA help; **Virginia**, blindness from macular degeneration
- Cheryl Reames**—fibromyalgia; diverticulitis
- Judy Sartin**—rotator cuff injury; spinal stenosis
- Judy and Mike Strand**—hepatitis trtment
- Lynda Szymanski**—COPD, lung weakness

Travel The Szymanskis are out of town today.

Rejoice The Shreves are expecting their first baby in April.

Nowhere did it have anything to do with sodomy. We've changed the meaning of that word in popular use and therefore in most people's thinking.

The Biblical worldview regarding language itself is in John 1:1. Here we discover that language is so important that God identifies Himself, our Lord Jesus Christ, as the Word.



Exposing current trends *honor and truth*

Liar, Liar, Pantsuit on Fire, by Jonah Goldberg and Noah Rothman

Something was made clear this week: Hillary Clinton is a committed and unapologetic liar. There was an enormous amount of theorizing about what the real story behind Benghazi really was. To me it's always been obvious. The White House was caught off guard—for reasons stemming both from ideology and incompetence—on September 11, 2012. As they have after virtually every other (jihadist) terrorist attack on Americans, they acted as if it had absolutely nothing to do with them. As with the Times Square bomber, the Fort Hood shooter, and other Islamist assaults, there's always some other reason for the bloodshed, some attempt to claim, at least for a while, that this was an "isolated incident" with no broader implications for the War on Terror or Obama's foreign policy. But even this White House understood that spinning the Benghazi attack as an isolated incident wasn't going to work, so they went with the story about the video, cf. Ps 31:18; 52:3; 59:12.

Thursday's hearings confirmed that Hillary Clinton deliberately and knowingly lied when she blamed it all on that video. This really isn't a debatable point now. We can argue about why she lied and we can debate whether that lie matters. But that she lied is incontrovertible, cf. Ps 109:2; 119:29, 163.

First of all, we know that the video story wasn't, in fact, true.

Second, we know that the Obama administration knew it wasn't true.

Third, we know that Hillary knew it wasn't true. (Perhaps you could claim that she was lying to the Egyptian prime minister when she said, "We know that the attack in Libya had nothing to do with the film." But it seems less likely that she would have lied to her own daughter on the night of the attack.)

After reading many of Clinton's e-mails—never mind her bizarre claim in the Democrat debate that the Libyan intervention was a success story—it seems pretty clear that one of her motivations was to shift blame away from what she—and Sid Blumenthal—had wrought. They had schemed for a long time to find a way to spin the Libyan adventure as her triumph in anticipation of a presidential run. The Benghazi terrorist attack threatened to shed light on the underlying policy failure—not just of failing to provide security, but of the whole intervention. Better to blame the video, cf. Pr 12:19,22.

Protect the Hive Queen! We learned something else as well: Much of the mainstream media simply does not care, cf. Pr 17:7. The media's response to the hearings? "A useless exercise; we learned nothing new. Hillary Clinton lied over and over and over, but she did it with poise and grace, so she's the winner." Many political analysts have evaluated Clinton's performance as they would a Broadway play. Her posture, her composure amid withering and extended questioning, and her general command of the issues was indeed impressive. The notion, however, that nothing had been revealed that was previously unknown by the Benghazi committee is nothing short of a lie.

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Assembly Schedule

Sunday

Bible classes	9:00 am
Morning assembly	10:00 am
Afternoon assembly	1:30 pm

Wednesday

Bible classes	7:30 pm
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Sunday morning

- **adult Bible class**, A Life-Changing Encounter with Christ from "The Gospel According to John," Kenny Boyd

Please return elder appointment forms today to Larry or DeWayne.

Thanks to everyone who worked to spruce up the building yesterday.