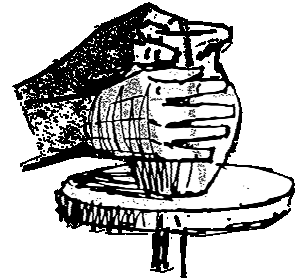


His Workmanship: Westside

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

—Ephesians 2:10



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Isaiah 64:8

The Paradox of the Cross and Fruitfulness, John 12:24-26, by Jeff Strite and Randy Bataanon

People struggle for life. They fight for their rights and wrestle for their greatness, only to find that it is only by losing them that we can find them. Jesus said, *"The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. I tell you the truth, unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. Whoever loves his life will lose it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves Me must follow Me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves Me,"* Jn 12:24-26.

Two engineers, one from Indiana and the other from Notre Dame, were out in a yard standing by a flagpole, vigorously arguing. A student from Purdue happened by and asked what they were doing. "Oh," replied the student from I.U., *"we were discussing how best to determine the height of this flagpole and the equation to use."* "That's easy enough," declared the Purdue student, as he took the pole out of the ground, laid it down on the grass, pulled out his tape measure and declared: *"It's 10' 6" long."* As the Purdue student walked away, the engineer from I.U. turned to the one from Notre Dame and declared: *"Isn't that just like a guy from Purdue. You ask him for height, and he gives you length."*

We Christians live in a world where heavenly things confuse our earthly minds, a world of paradox. We see unseen things, 2 Cor 4:18; we conquer by yielding, Rm 6:16-18. We find rest under a

yoke, Mt 11:28-30; we reign by serving, Mk 10:42-44; we are made great by becoming little, Lk 9:48. We are exalted by being humble, Mt 23:12; we are made free by becoming His bond servants, Rm 6:10. We become strong by being weak, 2 Cor 12:10; we become wise by being fools for Christ's sake, 1 Cor 1:20-21. We triumph in defeat, 2 Cor 12:7-9; we find victory by glorying in our infirmities, 2 Cor 12:5. What was this amazing paradox which Jesus was teaching in John? He was saying three things: I. Only by death can we gain life. II. Only by spending life can we retain it. III. Only by serving will greatness come.

I. Only by Death Can We Gain Life.

Perhaps most difficult of all for us: we live by dying. This is a hard saying. Jesus was telling His disciples that to live they needed to die. That's what He's telling us! This is not a comfortable teaching. Why not? Because most of us are not in a big hurry to die. As much as we sing hymns about going home to heaven ("When the roll is called up yonder," "When we all get to heaven"), we don't want to think about what has to happen before we go. When the time comes to die, even the most spiritual want to stay here. We've grown accustomed to this world. We instinctively defend our lives, our loved ones, our possessions. We've trained ourselves to survive.

For example, when the Apollo project was beginning, there arose an argument between NASA engineers and

scientists over how to make the best use of the space on board the rocket. The scientists wanted as much room as possible for lab work; the engineers wanted back-up systems in case something failed. They were at a stalemate until they asked the astronauts. What would you have chosen, lab space or back up units? What do you think the astronauts chose? That's right—survival.

And yet, Jesus tells us our very usefulness—our fruitfulness in God—depends on our willingness to surrender our lives, even to die for Him. A grain of wheat is ineffective and unfruitful so long as it is preserved, as it were, in safety and security, kept in a jar. Only when it is thrown into the cold ground and buried there as if in a tomb will it bear fruit. In short, it is in dying—not in doing—that we bear fruit for God.

• It is by dying to sin through repentance, baptism, and total surrender/submission/obedience to Christ that we can gain eternal life in God.

• It is only when we bury our personal aims and ambitions that we begin to be of real use to God.

• It is by the death of our personal desires and ambition that we become servant of God.

• It is by surrendering our own ways to God's way that we become fruitful and effective for God.

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Cross & Fruitfulness, from p. 1

II. Only by Spending Life Can We Retain It.

The person who loves his life is moved by two aims, by selfishness and by the desire for security. Not once or twice, but many times Jesus insisted that he who hoards his life must in the end lose it, and he who spends his life must in the end gain it.

• People usually choose personal safety and avoid risk. But by taking the risk of being called Christian and being ridiculed for the faith, we can retain life with God.

• People resist rules and cry for freedom. But it is by spending life according to rules of God's word that we can gain real happiness, freedom, and peace.

• People avoid danger and persecution, so they choose what is generally accepted. But it is by living and dying for Christ that we can gain eternal life.

To put it another way: if you were placed in the position of obeying God when it might cost you your very life, what would you choose? The Bible gives us examples of those who chose to avoid obedience when the price was too high:

1. ten spies who went into Canaan ("we looked like grasshoppers")
2. the rich young ruler (Jesus looked on him, loved him, and said, "Sell all that you have")
3. Peter (denied knowing Christ three times)

They all regretted their decisions.

"No doubt we will exist longer if we take things easily, if we avoid all strain, if we sit at the fire and husband life, if we look after ourselves as a hypochondriac looks after his health. No doubt we will exist longer—but we will never live," William Barclay.

In contrast, the Bible gives amazing accounts of courageous people were willing to die for God.

1. Abraham sacrificed Isaac, saying "God will provide Himself a lamb for the sacrifice," Gen 22:8.
2. Job said, "Though He slay me, yet I will serve Him," Job 13:15.
3. Joshua said, "Choose you this day whom you will serve," Josh 24:15.
4. Hananiah, Azariah, and Mishael said,

"Our God will deliver us..., but if not..." Dan 3:16-18.

5. John the Baptist said, "He must increase, and I must decrease," Jn 3:30. We have only to think of what this world would have lost if there had not been men prepared to forget their personal safety, security, selfish gain, and selfish advancement. The world owes everything to people who recklessly spent their strength and gave themselves to God and to others.

III. Only by Serving Will Greatness Come.

Each one of the five examples above made hard decisions and succeeded where lesser men would have failed. Why was that? Because of Christ's principle: "Whoever serves Me must follow Me; and where I am, My servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves Me," Jn 12:26. "The Father honors those who serve." It is at the feet of the cross that greatness starts; it is by loving others and thinking of their welfare that we become great. In God's economy death comes before resurrection. Certain seeds must die in our lives and be buried (not to rise like zombies):

1. The Seed of Your Priorities. When I talk to people about becoming Christians, I say that part of what they need to do to be saved is to "confess that Jesus is Lord." I explain to them that this is more than saying the "right words." It means giving Jesus complete Lordship, or ownership and control, of their lives. I point to a calendar. Every day of the week belongs to God. Lordship means my work time and my free time belong to God. They are no longer my own. "Then He said to another, 'Follow Me.' But he said, 'Lord, let me first go and bury my father.' Jesus said, 'Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God.'" And another said, 'Lord, I will follow You, but let me first go and bid them farewell who are at my house.' But Jesus said to him, 'No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.'" Lk 9:59-62.

2. The Seed of Your Possessions. When I'm explaining Lordship for those who want to become Christians, I also take out my wallet. I tell them, "There's not much money in there, but what there is must belong to God. My credit cards belong to Him." I point to the pictures of my wife

and children. They belong to Him. My car, my house, all my stuff—they all must be His if He is to be Lord of my life. "I know your works—you are neither cold nor hot. I would that you were either cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. You say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and do not need a thing'—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked," Rev 3:15-17.

3. The Seed of Your Personality. Paul told us, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, Who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross," Phil 2:5-8. When Jesus answered Satan's bread temptation, He essentially told him: "I don't have to survive. I'm willing to die." When Jesus was in the garden before His crucifixion, He prayed: "If it be possible, take this cup from me yet, not as I will, but Your will be done," Mt 26:39. He was willing to die to fulfill His purpose. And because He was willing to die, He died and finished the work His Father gave Him, Jn 17:4; 19:30. He gave us life through His resurrection. That which appears to be death to us often gives life.

In his book, Written in Blood, Robert Coleman told of a little boy whose sister needed a blood transfusion. The doctor explained that she had the same disease the boy had recovered from two years earlier. Her only hope for recovery was a transfusion from someone who had previously conquered the disease. Since the two children had the same rare blood type, the boy was the ideal donor. "Would you give your blood to Mary?" the doctor asked. Johnny hesitated. His lower lip started to tremble. Then he smiled and said, "Sure, for my sister." Soon the two children were wheeled into the hospital room, Mary, pale and thin; Johnny, robust and healthy. Neither spoke, but when their eyes met, Johnny grinned. But as the nurse inserted the needle into his arm, *continued on p. 3*



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

Cross, Fruitfulness, from p. 2

Johnny's smile faded. He watched the blood flow in the tube. With the ordeal almost over, his voice, slightly shaky, broke the silence, "Doctor, when do I die?" He hadn't understood the procedure, but he did understand true love and sacrificial giving.

"Jesus came to the world with a new view of life. The world looked on glory as conquest, the acquisition of power, the right to rule. He looked on glory as a cross. He taught men that only by death comes life; that only by spending life do we retain it; that only by service comes greatness. And the extraordinary thing is that when we come to think of it, Christ's paradox is nothing other than the truth of common sense," Barclay.

Sex and Cities, from p. 4

Even Hillary Clinton weighed in on the side of the radical measure, which punishes people who refuse to celebrate transgenderism and homosexuality with massive fines. "No one should face discrimination for who they are," she insisted. No one, apparently, except Christians, who are the target of this nationwide march to silence religious liberty in America. Stripping parents, local citizens, and businesses of their First Amendment rights isn't Texan—and more important, it is not American. But free speech and free religion haven't stopped liberals from injecting a toxic agenda into school rooms, board rooms, and bathrooms across America.

This movement isn't anything new. Some 20 years ago, the homosexual movement began its quiet work through the public schools. Now, the transgender movement is following the same path. The issue exploded like a bombshell last May in Virginia's Fairfax County Public Schools, America's tenth largest school district. That was when

Discipleship Here At Home

Words Matter "rapture"

"Rapture" is used by millennialists to mean the sweeping up of believers to the sky to be with Jesus before He supposedly returns to earth to reign. It is based on 1 Thes 4:17: "Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air." But they leave out the last part of the verse: "And thus we shall always be with the Lord," because they believe that those "raptured" will return to earth to reign with Jesus (not "ever be with the Lord," in the air). The word "rapture" does not appear in scripture, and the millennial reign of Christ is based on a misunderstanding of Rev 20:1-7 and the concept that Jesus failed to set up His kingdom when He came and replaced His kingdom with the church (erroneously thinking that His kingdom is earthly, not spiritual). Use "rapture" in the dictionary sense, not the "churchy" sense: "[Latin *raptus*—seized] 1. a state or experience of being carried away to overwhelming emotion, transported with ecstasy, delight, or passion; 2. a mystical experience where the spirit is exalted to a knowledge of divine things." Thus, "When he got his first BB gun, his rapture showed in his face."

parents and taxpayers first learned of plans to add "gender identity" to the school system's "non-discrimination" policy—meaning that transgender students of any age would be able to choose whether to use the boys' or girls' restrooms and locker rooms and which sex's sports teams to play on.

Hundreds of stunned parents turned out at a school board meeting to protest, but their complaints fell on deaf ears, as the Board voted 10-1 to approve the radical new policy. Then, within days, the board also adopted a new curriculum to teach "gender fluidity" lessons in the classroom (the timing was a coincidence, the Board said). The board passed the buck for the unpopular policies to the US Dept of Ed, which has threat



PRAY FOR healing, protection, help

- **Rod Green**—cut off tip of finger
- **Jim Reingrover, Monica Thompson, others**—sore throat, cough
- **Tracy Corray**—broken bone in foot; boot
- **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; **REJOICE**—off chemo; 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 the Lord .
- **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; **Amanda Mailloux**—IBS
- Menards**—Lloyd diabetes, Alzheimers; VA help; Virginia, blindness from macular degeneration
- Sandra Perry**—diabetes complications; oxygen
- Cheryl Reames**—fibromyalgia; diverticulitis
- Judy Sartin**—rotator cuff injury; spinal stenosis
- Judy and Mike Strand**—hepatitis treatment
- Lynda Szymanski**—COPD, lung weakness
- Rejoice** The **Shreves** are expecting their first baby in April.

ened school districts with a loss of federal funds (\$42 million/year to Fairfax schools) unless they treat the statutory prohibition on sex discrimination to include "gender identity."

Soon, though, board members will answer to a higher authority—voters. A number of candidates opposed to the new transgender policies are challenging incumbents in the Fairfax County School Board elections Tuesday. It's crucial for pro-family voters to turn out and send a message that they do not want to be governed by sexual radicals and federal bureaucrats.



Exposing current trends transgender ID

Sex and the Cities, by Tony Perkins

Houston is abuzz heading into Tuesday's election. With everyone from celebrities to athletes weighing in on Proposition 1, the bathroom ordinance might be the most-watched issue of 2015. (In May 2014 the Houston City Council voted 11-6 to allow men to use women's bathrooms, citing liability issues if transgendered people sued the city for false arrest. Outrage over subjecting women to cross-dressing men when using city facilities moved citizens to petition to overturn the ordinance, which Houston's lesbian mayor, Annise Parker, had urged, saying, "This is about me.") The ordinance is about giving local government new power to force private individuals and businesses to affirm homosexual conduct and actual or perceived "gender identity" under threat of serious criminal penalties.

The ordinance would allow men access to women's bathrooms, shower rooms, and locker rooms (any "place of public accommodation"). The proposed ordinance requires businesses to make all women's bathrooms, showers, and locker rooms available to all who are dressed in female attire, without regard to biological sex. This risks women and children.

It would force employers and private business owners to violate their religious and moral convictions. It subjects people to criminal prosecution for refusing to participate in the celebration of homosexual conduct because of their religious beliefs or conviction of conscience. This includes bakers, florists, planners, musicians, and others who might decline to participate in same-sex weddings that violates their faith. A similar law in New Mexico was used to force a photographer Christian to use her gifts and talents to affirm and participate in a same-sex "commitment ceremony" that she disagreed with or face punishment by the state.

It promotes government-backed discrimination by seeking to criminalize opposition to homosexual and transgender behavior. Anti-discrimination protections for race, color, national origin, sex, and religion are already protected in state and federal law. Many believe the ordinance will actually promote discrimination by imposing "sexual orientation" and "gender identity" as protected classes onto the private sector of Houston, while centralizing the power of investigation, fines, and punishment under the Mayor. **It equates race with sexual conduct.** The Civil Rights Act of 1964 bars discrimination based on race (and color, national origin, sex, and religion). The U.S Supreme has declined to subject classifications based on "sexual orientation" to the "strict scrutiny" legal standard applied to race (protected).

It increases government interference in the private sector by mandating employment of homosexual/transgendered people. The ordinance seeks to substitute the judgment of the Mayor for that of the employer regarding what qualities or characteristics are most relevant to a particular job. Houston businesses could be forced under penalty of law to hire people that openly promote and practice homosexual or transgender conduct that is inappropriate for their job and contrary to the business owner's religious beliefs.

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DeWayne Howell (303) 973-7283

Preacher

Jim Reingrover (303) 973-5102

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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

- **sermon**, "Modesty," Larry Campbell

Sunday afternoon

- **Answering Questions**: "Where is the Ark of the Covenant?" DeWayne Howell

Feeding on His Word Reading

Everyone is invited to an open Bible reading of Hebrews Friday evening, 11/6, 7:30 pm, at the Topes' house, supper after the reading. See **Joel Walker** for schedule.