

# VOICE OF CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

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*From the  
Pastor*



## ETERNITY

When you look in the mirror at yourself, or consider yourself, every person at one time or another will ask themselves, "Is this all there

is to life?" The answer is "no." This life is only a preparation for the next life which will be an eternal existence in the presence of our Father God. He has prepared eternity as a reward for those that faithfully serve Him. And He has occupied it throughout all of time. Psalm 90:1-2 tells us, **"Lord, you have been our refuge through all generations. Before the mountains were born, the earth and the world brought forth, from eternity to eternity you are God."** Also in Psalms 102:25-27, **"Of old you laid the earth's foundations; the heavens are the work of your hands. They perish, but you remain; they all wear out like a garment, like clothing you change them and they are changed, but you are the same, your years have no end."** God is eternal, that is clearly seen and understood in His Holy Word. Yet, do you realize that God made us to be eternal also. Originally, Adam was to eat of the Tree of Life and live forever in the Garden of Eden. When sin entered in, then death also entered in. Man had to be abolished from the Garden, lest he eat of the tree and live forever in his sin. Still, that did not remove God's intent toward His creation, that we have an eternity mentality. We were created to live forever. In Ecclesiastes 3:11, we read, **"He has made everything appropriate to its time, and has put the timeless into their hearts, without men's ever discovering, from beginning to end, the work which God has done."** We all know that eternal life is the prize for believing in Jesus as Lord and Savior of your life. Do you realize that we were made as eternal creations? Even the lost will exist for eternity in the lake of fire.

## UNDERSTANDING HATE IN THE BIBLE

Religious activists are always waving signs about how God hates homosexuals, abort-ionists, drunkards and the list goes on. As a Western culture, we don't understand the Biblical meaning of hate. To understand the word "hate," we must first understand the Jewish understanding of love. Love was not seen as emotions or strong feelings but rather as a commitment or an alignment with the object of the love. A continued commitment to a person would ultimately bring forth love with emotions and feelings but it did not necessarily begin that way. Hate is not viewed by the Jews as an emotion. Hate is viewed as not aligning with something or someone or as taking a stand against something or someone. Hate doesn't mean to love less or to have a fury that is capable of harm to its object. We view hate as an emotion in our culture and therefore interpret the Bible in like manner. Hate, as an emotion or feeling, is capable of destroying not only the object but also the one hating. This understanding has helped me understand the scripture more accurately when it refers to the hate of God. If God dealt with us through emotions, then we would all be dead. God makes His stand known through His Word and through the Holy Spirit; therefore, allowing grace to be offered to the one who God has to stand against. God's love is revealed through His standing against or His non-alignment with the wrong. This truth has helped me understand God's actions toward sin and wrong that is so prevalent among us. This truth has shown me the vastness of God's love in bad situations. Let's learn to take the emotion out of hate and align ourselves with the Grace of God.

2 Corinthians 5:1-8, **"For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, being clothed, we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened; not that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. Now he that hath wrought us for the very same thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. Therefore, we are always confident, knowing that, while we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord. For we walk by faith, not by sight. We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord."** This earthly body has been likened unto a "tent" or a temporary dwelling, while we have been promised a "house" which is constructed and maintained by God, and is eternal. This house is filled with wonderful things that can only be imagined in the spiritual realm. 1 Corinthians 2:9 shows us, **"But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."** Earthly

# FOREVER

Yes, that is how long you and I will live! What then is with all of these funerals and war deaths? All of the horrible accidents and murders and people who just die because they have grown old, and their bodies have just worn out? How about people who die from deadly diseases? In the Bible, in Genesis,

there is a discussion about creation. God said, **“Let us make man in our own image.”** The other members of this discussion were Jesus and the Holy Spirit. (All one, yet separate) Now were they talking about making us to look like them? Remember this all took place in the Garden of Eden area. So were they talking about making us to look like the Iraqis do today? I don’t think so. What I believe was being discussed was to make man (God’s created man) to be body, soul (mind and brain) and spirit. So, when it is all said and done, the physical body and soul can die, while the spirit lives on. In fact, it will never die.

Most of the funeral methods of the early mankind, were eventually to put the deceased into the ground. But many cults had far different ways of getting rid of this hull that we call our body. Eskimos would take their old and infirm way out on the ice where the polar bear would find them and end the process. Early American Indian tribes built a platform up on stilts, and let the birds pick the carcass clean. In India, even today, a prominent person will be burned up in a gigantic bonfire, and his wife, or wives, are expected to cast herself into the fire to be consumed along with her dead husband. Many communities still put the body on a reed raft and float them downstream to the sea.

All of this represents the various ideas that people of the world have had as to what happens to this body at death. Our Bible is very specific about our spirit leaving our physical bodies at death. There are even some aspects in the Old Testament that would seem to indicate that at least some of the people had an idea that those who are alive can converse with the dead by conjuring up the spirit of the dead one. Saul sought advice from the spirit of Samuel. There are certain types of electronic cameras on the market today that show what is believed to be spirit beings in the pictures.

But our Bible tells us that when we pass on from this life, that we (our spirits) will go to be in God’s presence. It also says that even as Jesus was resurrected to a Spirit body, so too will we be resurrected to a spirit body. That is those whose life has been found accepted by the Lord. It also indicates that one day when all of Jesus’s enemies have been destroyed from this earth, we will be returned to this earth with Jesus as our Ruler. It also says that there will be some of those that were saved after the rapture, who got through the terrible time of tribulation. We, and those people, will live in a warless world for at least 1,000 years. Beyond that I hesitate to predict.

The Bible does not declare that the spirits of even the believers are going to Heaven, when this physical body dies. What it does say, is that our spirits will go to be in the presence of the Lord. Then at a future time, the believer’s spirit will be united with a resurrection body, that at least partially resembles our own appearance, as we did on the earth. I believe that this newly resurrected spirit body will be recognized by the members of our family that have gone before, and there will be rejoicing. This time of recognition though, will be for a short time and then there will be no more tears.

What are we going to have to do while we are on this earth, and before our demise, that will let us have all of this wonderful promise? Actually, we can do nothing to earn this life. It is a gift when we believe on Jesus. Who is this Jesus? This Jesus is the living Son of God, Who gave His own human life so that we might not have to pay horrible penalties. His Word gives us all instructions, and how to live after He has saved us. When we ask Jesus to forgive our sins, it is as though they had never occurred. Then stop sinning, and you’re in.

Nothing would make Jesus happier than to see the entire population of the world saved, but that is not going to happen. In fact, the writings and time have indicated that the ones that will indeed be saved, are frighteningly low. Lots of people think that they are going to Heaven, but the Bible says that, **“To these people He will say, ‘Depart from me, you doers of evil, for I never knew you.’”** Is your forgiven spirit going to live forever with Jesus, or will you be one of those that are turned away because you didn’t care enough to find out Who He is and begin to serve Him?

That unforgiven spirit will also live forever. But not with Jesus; instead it will be with the evil prince of all evil. Choose who you will serve! God bless us, every one.

## ABOUT GOD'S FAITHFULNESS

Bro. Vic Clayton

*We are God’s idea. We are His. His Face. His eyes. His hands. His touch. We are Him. Look deeply into the face of every human being on earth, and you will see His likeness. Though some appear to be distant relatives, they are not. God has no cousins, only children. We are incredibly, the body of Christ. And though we may not act like our Father, there is no greater truth than this; We are His. Unalterably. He loves us. Undyingly. Nothing can separate us from the love of Christ. (See Romans 8:38-39)*

*Father, forgive us for the times that we have questioned you; forgive us for the times we have doubted you; forgive us for the times we’ve shaken our heads and pounded our fists against the earth and cried, “Where are you?” For Father, we know that you have been here—you’ve carried us through the valley, and you’ve given us strength. By Max Lucado*

# DEAR CHURCH, BRIDE OF CHRIST

Greetings from India. Just a note to say “hi” and tell you a little bit about this part of the church, the Bride. My Father has instilled in my heart the desire for us to be one in Him. He wants us to be in unity, because we are one body. It has been wonderful to experience the love of Christ being shed abroad in people’s hearts as it has been here.

We landed in Malaysia on February 27th. We were greeted at the airport by Melanie. She has traveled with Miss Mary for 13 years. She is a spirit-filled Christian. Pastor Lawrence, Chariss, Jackie, and Toni all full of the love of God, have been such a blessing. We may be from different countries, but the love of Jesus is a universal language. It is so awesome to experience God’s love in this manner. I just met these precious saints and it feels like I have known them for a while.

We left for India on March 3 and were greeted at the airport with leis of flowers and much love. We are staying in an awesome church, with Pastor Francis Jackson. He travels the globe preaching Jesus. They have a Christian school and orphanage also.

Being here really makes me appreciate the USA. We have a lot of things wrong in our country, but we can have church in our home if we want, and we don’t have to be concerned about dying or being arrested. Here in India, when you become a Christian, if the entire family is not converted, you lose your family. They turn their backs on you, not only do you lose your family, but people can die over here for just being a Christian.

We went to a pastor’s home for lunch on Tuesday. His wife prepared a feast for us. They prepared their very best and do not eat with us. They and their family eat the leftovers after we finish. As we visited with him, he told us that he was having meetings in his home. The people in the neighborhood, being Muslims, do not want the church service in the area. They called the police, and the meetings were stopped. The neighbors were angry with him and are taking his mail. He doesn’t get his bills or any other mail just because he wants to have church in his house.

As I rode on the way back to the church, I wept. I cried out, “Lord, help us to be more appreciative of what we have at home. We can worship when we want to; have church when we want to; where we want to.”

Church, the Lord is getting ready to come for His bride. He is pouring out His love, His Spirit, to join us together as He meant for us to be. He wants us to be one Body, full of His love.

As I travel to different places and experience the unity, I stand in awe. He is truly binding us together as One. Be ready, church. He is getting ready for the ceremony. If you are not ready, get ready. Ask Jesus into your heart. Become a part of the church, the Bride of Christ. If you are ready, let your light shine. The Light of Jesus, so that they can know Him too.

Continue to pray for me as I am on the mission field, and I am praying for you.

Much Love, Your Sister Bess Graham 3/11/06

## ETERNITY (Cont. from Pg. 1)

gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but refuse, that I may win Christ.” (Philippians 3:7) We have been made

all things in Christ Jesus our Lord. To understand that is to be spiritually minded, such that the things of this earth are of less significance to us. God’s Word instructs us to be spiritually minded, walking in the Spirit, such that we will not be subject to the desires of the flesh. We have a heavenly calling, that requires us to live at a level that the flesh cannot conceive. Our Heavenly Father has prepared a great reward for those that will live and meditate at a spiritual level, at an “eternity” mentality. Living our earthly lives with an eternity mentality will cause us to not be as anxious over the little things. We will no longer be “short-sighted” in our goals and objectives. Everything we do will be influenced by what we believe God wants to see happen. As children of God, we will want to do our Father’s will in all areas of our lives. Our priorities will be to please our Father, and to love one another. Matthew 25:33-40 relates God’s plan for our earthly ministry, “**And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; For I was hungry, and ye gave me food; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; Naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee hungry, and fed thee; or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in; or naked and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.**” We have an inheritance. It is based upon our acknowledgment of Jesus as Lord and Savior of our lives. As a result of Jesus living through us, we will love our Heavenly Father, and our fellow man, as we love ourselves. This is the greatest commandment as presented by Jesus in the New Testament. In the above scriptures, Jesus indicates that our love for Him and the Father will manifest in our unselfish sharing and ministering unto those who are in need. To give, not expecting anything in return, is to make an offering unto the Lord. God will

# ETERNITY Cont. from Pg. 3

If we have an eternal hope, then upon what do we trust for this hope? Our trust is in God, that He is able to perform all that He has promised in His Holy Word. As such, let us look at a few scriptures regarding the eternal nature of God. Revelation 1:8 says, **“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.”** Also, in Revelation 1:18, **“I am he that liveth,**

**and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore, Amen, and have the keys of hades and death.”** Isaiah 44:6, **“Thus saith the Lord, the King of Israel, and his redeemer, the Lord of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last, and beside me there is no God.”** Then in Isaiah 57:15, **“For thus saith the high and lofty One who inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also who is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.”** God has called us to be of a like mind, that is to have an “eternity mentality.” To understand that the God of the universe is our Father, and wants to bless us, should make us humble and contrite. This lesson was prepared to

make us reconsider our relationship with our Heavenly Father, and to perhaps better understand His desire for us to be more Christ-like in all that we say and do. Seek the higher, loftier plain, where the Father dwells, and see if He will not receive your worship and praise, and bless you more than abundantly. Furthermore, He will minister to your needs and others through you by His power and His strength. May God our Father, and Jesus our Lord and Savior, be glorified forevermore.

Bro. Mike Woods



CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP  
994 Willie Hill Road  
Gilbert, La. 71336

