

“The Closer”

It's the bottom of the ninth inning. The visiting team is ahead by one run with the home team up to bat. Bases are loaded with no outs. Who does the coach put in the game to pitch the team to victory? He's called “The Closer”.

What characteristics make “The Closer” so valuable to his team? Let's look at a few of those and make spiritual applications.

1) He is always available when needed. Being one of the most skilled pitchers/players is of no benefit to the team if he doesn't attend the game. God needs each of us in our places at each assembly (Hebrews 10:23-25). He also needs each of us to be active in the community teaching the gospel to the lost and helping those who are in need (Matthew 28:19-20; Galatians 6:10).

2) He is willing to give his all for the team. “The Closer” is called upon to appear in more games than any other pitcher. He must be mentally and physically prepared each day to perform. He must willingly pour out all of his energy during the game. A half-hearted effort will be detrimental to his team's ability to win. Christians must be willing to sacrifice all for the Lord's Cause, just as Christ did for us (Philippians 2:5-11). God rejects our “lukewarm” service to Him (Revelation 3:16).

3) His mindset is to finish the game with a win. He enters the game at a critical point every time he plays. He is prepared to do everything in his power to help the team accomplish its goal of victory. He will not give up until the game is won. Christians are encouraged by Paul to “finish the course” (II Timothy 4:7). We are admonished in Galatians 6:9 to “*not be weary in well doing*”. Christ has prepared us a heavenly home (John 14:1-4) if we will endure to the end. As each day on earth draws us nearer to our own eternal destiny, how prepared are we to be “The Closer” in life's “game” and gain the victory of eternal life in heaven?

the Elders

Things “Supposed”

The word “supposed” is found eight times in the Bible. Interestingly, it is only found in the New Testament. There are four Greek words that are thus translated. Closely associated with the verb “supposed” are its other tenses. The word “suppose” is found ten times in the Bible (one of which is found in the Old Testament) and is translated from three different Greek words.

The form “supposing” is found seven times (all in the New Testament) and is translated from three different Greek words. Altogether then, this word in its varied forms is found only one time in the Old Testament (II Samuel 13:32) and 24 times in the New Testament. In the New Testament, eight different Greek words are translated “suppose” in some fashion. These various Greek words usually vary only slightly in their meaning or are either more or less general in their applications.

Our English word “suppose” has the following primary meanings: 1) “To think or imagine to oneself as true, believe or believe probable, think, presume; 2) To assume as true for the sake of argument or illustration.” The noun form “supposition” means “that which is supposed; conjecture.” Thus, the English carries the connotation of that which is not known but is presumed. In light of these thoughts, let's examine some of the passages in which a form of this word is found. It provides for an interesting study. We shall begin with the word “supposed”.

Matthew 20:10: “*But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny.*” This is the Lord's parable of the laborers in the vineyard. The passage under consideration involved those who had been hired “early in the morning” to work in the vineyard. The specific time is not given, but since the householder went out at “the third hour” (9:00a.m.) to gather other workers (Matthew 20:3), their work began much earlier. When the time came for payment these saw those who were hired at various other intervals during the day receiving the same wages (a penny) that they had been promised (continued)

Things “Supposed” (continued)

and “supposed” they would be given more. When they weren’t, they complained. From this we learn a number of lessons. Man does not merit salvation, although each had something to do and man must work (obey) in order to obtain God’s pardon (Hebrews 5:9; James 2:17-26). The Lord is merciful to all who come to Him (regardless of the time in life they do so). God is a merciful and loving God. Even those who truly obey at “the eleventh hour” will receive God’s full pardon (thus, as long as there is life, there is hope). Regardless of the hours spent in His service, the time for such service is short (James 4:14).

Eddy

Unanswered Questions or Unquestioned Answers?

Which do you believe to be more dangerous? In my judgment, the more dangerous of the two is “unquestioned answers”. I’m convinced that in and out of the church, many have grown lazy and content with someone else doing their study for them. Can you imagine an adult man literally being spoon-fed by his wife because he’s too lazy to pick up a fork and feed himself? Preposterous! Yet, how many grown adults allow their parents, their preachers, their spouses, their Bible class teachers and the religious media to spoon feed them their religion? Their faith is not based on what they have searched out and found to be true, but based solely on what others have told them is true.

If I may borrow a phrase, “inquiring minds want to know.” We need to be more like those noble Bereans who “searched the Scriptures daily” to determine the truthfulness of what they were being taught. In other words, they weren’t content with unquestioned answers.

Let’s be sure that we ourselves haven’t been guilty of accepting answers to life’s most important matters without questioning. May we all have the desire to be better students of the Bible, and may God help us to have the courage to follow our studied convictions!

Steve Higginbotham

via *Religious Reminder*, Watterson Trail c/C, Louisville, KY

“Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls....”

(Jeremiah 6:16).

“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.” (I John 4:1)

What Did You Bring to Church?

When people come to worship services, they often bring a number of different things with them. Parents of small children make sure that they have a diaper bag with plenty of clean diapers and supplies. Most people make sure they have brought their Bibles and their lesson books for class. But of all the things that you bring with you to worship on Sundays, did you make sure to bring the most important things?

Did you bring a reverent attitude? Worship is the expression of reverence, devotion and praise to God. He is the Most Holy One (Isaiah 6:3). Therefore, because of the nature of worship and the nature of the One to be worshipped, the attitude demonstrated therein will be different from the attitude expressed at a football game. Yet many times one could not notice much difference in the two. Some cause a commotion by continually getting up and leaving the auditorium, by talking, by passing notes and by other common actions that take place during the worship. God cannot be pleased with those who have so little respect for His divinity and power that they behave in such a way as this.

Did you bring an active mind? Worship is also something that must be done from the heart and that involves an active mind. God has always detested worship done simply from ritual (Isaiah 1:10-17; Micah 6:6-8). Worship is an active process, not a passive one. Singing is to “teach and admonish...with grace in your hearts” (Colossians 3:16). Giving is to be cheerful, according to how one has purposed in his heart (II Corinthians 9:7). The Lord’s Supper is to be observed in memory of Jesus’ death, anticipating His return (I Corinthians 11:23-26). Prayer is also an active process that each must do (James 5:16b). And, of course, the teaching and learning of God’s Word takes an active mind (Acts 2:42; 17:11).

Did you bring a pure life? One of the biggest reasons that God rejected Judah’s worship was that their acts of worship were not done out of pure lives (Micah 6:6-8). Such hypocrisy has always been and will always be wrong. Jesus even went so far as to say that if one comes to worship and realizes that his brother has something against him, he first should go and reconcile things with his brother, then go and worship (Matthew 5:23-24).

Of all the things that we may bring with us to worship, let us always make sure that we bring those things that are most important. Otherwise, our worship is vain.

Kevin D. Beard

Via *Knowledge of Good & Evil*, Glendale c/C, Newbern, TN

A Prayer

Lord, let the day be one of light,
Build all our labors unto thee;
Thou, Who hast brought us out of night,
Keep us strong in Sincerity.

Hilary

SICK

Charlene Guard spent the night in the hospital for heart palpitations and weakness; CT scan showed a hiatal hernia. **Susan Mountcastle** had a heart catheterization on Thursday; report was very good; no sign of heart problems. **Barry White** has the "flu". **Euline Gilpin**, Eddy's mom, is having trouble w/her gall bladder and UTI. **Pieter Jager**, Yvette Mays' dad, 621, LGH, seizure and possible stroke. **Sammy Melton**, 8-yr. old grandson of a friend of Jo Hartman, has a brain tumor. **Jessica White**, Barry & Gloria's daughter-in-law, is in a hospital in Johnson City, TN, w/dehydration caused by vomiting. The baby is fine. *Continue to remember:* **Mary & Lynn Anderson, Bobby Argabright, Exel Aultman, Norma Biller, Betty Buckner, Willard Campbell, Marguerite Charles** (bladder infection), **Dotty Collins, Jim Dorsett, Francis Edelhouser, Paul Faw, Collin & Luetta Gregory, Patti Gwaltney, Dan Hudgins, A.C & Mickie Janney, Betty Jenkins, Martha Keith, Eddy King, Margaret Kratz, Oliver & Miriam Majors, Ocie Mayhew, Sophia Mays, Donnie Mountcastle** (heart catheterization on Friday at UVA in preparation for surgery to remove abdominal aneurysm on 6/27), **Jo Musgrove, Grace Myers, Joan Neighbors, Larry Phillips** (echo cardiogram, possible heart catheterization on 6/30, VCU, in preparation for kidney transplant), **Charlie Puckett, Fred Sabarbaro, Murphy Scott, Annette Shrader, Ruth Stanton, Ken Upchurch, E.V. & Effie Wimmer, Jerry Wood, Tom Wood, W.J. Wood** (spent time in LGH last week but was able to be with us on Wednesday evening).

SYMPATHY: We extend our love and sympathy to **Ashton Burnette**, a teammate of Luke Guard, whose father passed away on Wednesday.

MISSIONARIES: the **Pearsons, the Staffords** and the TZ2000 team.

MILITARY: **Ty Stricklin, John Shannon and Gabriel Hayes** who are in Iraq.

OTHER: On-going Bible studies; "Restore 2006"

THIS WEEK AT WEST SIDE

Today: "Lift up your hands in the sanctuary, and bless the LORD" (Psalm 134:2).

Monday: Happy birthday to **Peggy Paxton!**

Tuesday: W.O.W. meeting, 10:30am

Wednesday: Bible Study, Summer Series, **Larry Phillips** (Radford), 7pm..

Thursday: Happy birthday to **Ed Argabright!**

Friday: Happy birthday to **John Black!**

Saturday: Happy birthday to **Wayne Dixon & Mitzi Pettit!**

Sunday, 6/18: VCC begins today. Happy anniversary to **Walter & Betty Jenkins!**

NEEDED FOR VCC

18 small squeezable bottles of syrup; give to **Velda Gearhart**. They also need 2 male counselors. See **Lyn Shrader** or **Eddy Gilpin** if you can be one.

ADDRESS

Kyle & Kellee Gilpin, 76 N. Iron Creek CT, #203, Collierville, TN 38017

ITEMS FOR STAFFORDS—June

Stroganoff mix, Italian dressing

ACHIEVEMENTS LIST

Once again we will be making a bulletin insert to honor our young people's achievements during the past academic year. If you'd like your child included in the list, please list the name, school, grade and achievement on a paper and put it in the box on the Audio Room door **TODAY**.

ATTENTION, LADIES/RE: THE CHURCH LIBRARY

The men have done their part of the work of getting the church library in order. Now it's our turn to add that special touch to it. Here's a list of things I've come up with that I think would help make the library an inviting and relaxing place. If you'd like to donate, make or purchase any of the following, please e-mail me or let me know at services. I thank you for your help! Items: curtain/valance for the window in colors that compliment carpet/walls; 2 small end tables that compliment the library table; silk plants—ivy or small tree; children's books (The children's section is sorely lacking. If you have any lying around, we'd love to put them to use.) a nice stepstool (I'm so short). E-mail: ellenmearnhart@yahoo.com
—Michelle Earnhart, Librarian

SEW BEE IT

Anthony and Shasta Brown are going to Arusha, Tanzania, to become a part of the Tanzania 2000 work. Their container will be shipped in mid-August. She plans to teach the African women to quilt as a means to provide fellowship and income for their families. She is asking all ladies who have fabric, batting, scissors, needles, patterns and other quilting items which are not being used to send them to Africa. **Kay Anderson** and **Glenna Richardson** are coordinating the collection of any items donated and will send them to the Hattiesburg church to be put in the Browns' container. Items should be brought to the building **no later than August 1**. Please donate new or used items to help get this effort started.

They Know a Lot about Giving

Answering a knock on the door of his African hut, a missionary found a native boy holding up a large fish. The boy said, "Preacher, you taught us to give at least one tenth, so here, I've brought you my tenth." As the missionary gratefully took the fish, he questioned the young lad. "Where are the other nine fish?" At this the boy beamed and said, "Oh, they're still back in the river. I'm going back to catch them now." That's faith! (cf. Malachi 3:10).

Another African boy listened carefully as the teacher explained why Americans give presents to each other on holidays. "The gift is an expression of our friendship for each other," she said. When the next holiday came, the boy brought the teacher a seashell of lustrous beauty. "Where did you ever find such a beautiful shell?" the teacher asked. The youth told her that there was only one spot where such extraordinary shells could be found—a certain bay that was several miles away. "Why...why, it's gorgeous," said the teacher, "but you shouldn't have gone all that way to get a gift for me." His eyes brightening, the boy answered, "Long walk part of gift" (read II Samuel 24:24).

Jacksonville c/C

Via "Good Tidings..."

Opportunities to Serve **June 2006**
Announcements.....Charlie Gwaltney
Reader (PM)..... Kirk Gilpin
Preside..... Tom Rogers
Serve..... Andy Duran, Adam House, Bobby Martin, Grat Tucker
(PM) Mark Brooks, Paul Mays

Opening Prayer
6/4.....Tom Duff, (PM) Jeff Durham
6/11.....Gene Benefield, (PM) Glenn Hartman
6/18.....Jerry Anderson, (PM) Charles Maness
6/25.....Squeaky Valentine, (PM) Wayne Dixon

Closing Prayer
6/4..... James Cooke, (PM) Murphy Scott
6/11..... Charlie Puckett, (PM) Mitch Jearls
6/18.....George Mellon, (PM) Barry White
6/25.....John Black, (PM) Fred Altizer

Greeters.....Earnharts, Sartains
Open/Close Building..... Bob Garby
Care of Communion..... P. Paxton, M. Janney; alt. E. Greene

Song Leaders
Sunday... (AM) E. Earnhart, (PM) J. Durham... (Wed.) O. Boyd
Care of Baptismal Garments..... Jackie Dixon
Ushers..... Greg Edwards, Norris Gearhart
Nursery..... Melissa Rogers, (PM) Charlene Guard
Alternates..... Tom Duff, Gary Sartain
Handouts.....Tom & Preston Duff; John & Jacob Hawks

OUR RECORD..... 5/31, 6/4, 2006
Wednesday..... 143
Sunday Bible Study..... 169
Sunday Morning Worship..... 193
Sunday Evening Worship..... 140
Contribution.....\$6,837.00

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Death of a Church

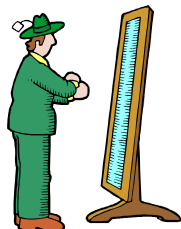
A new preacher in a small town spent the first four days making personal visits to each of the members, inviting them to come to his first services. The following Sunday, the church was all but empty.

Accordingly, the preacher placed a notice in the local newspapers stating that, because the church was dead, it was everyone's duty to give it a decent Christian burial. The funeral would be held the following Sunday afternoon, the notice said.

Morbidly curious, a large crowd turned out for the "funeral". In front of the pulpit they saw a closed coffin, smothered in flowers.

After the preacher delivered the eulogy, he opened the coffin and invited his congregation to come forward and pay their final respects to their dead church.

Filled with curiosity as to what would represent the corpse of a "dead church" all the people eagerly lined up to look in the coffin. Each "mourner" peeped into the coffin, then quickly turned away with a guilty, sheepish look. In the coffin, tilted at the correct angle, was a large mirror!



via *The Religious Reminder*, Watterson Trail c/C, Louisville, KY