

## **For Which We Are Gathered**

**By Kent Heaton**

“These are the statutes and judgments which you shall be careful to observe in the land which the Lord God of your fathers is giving you to possess, all the days that you live on the earth. You shall utterly destroy all the places where the nations which you shall dispossess served their gods, on the high mountains and on the hills and under every green tree. And you shall destroy their altars, break their sacred pillars, and burn their wooden images with fire; you shall cut down the carved images of their gods and destroy their names from that place. You shall not worship the Lord your God with such things. But you shall seek the place where the Lord your God chooses, out of all your tribes, to put His name for His dwelling place; and there you shall go” (Deut. 12:1-5).

The first day of the week is a special day. Unlike the other days of the week it is time of reflection, devotion and worship. Since the beginning of time the Lord has desired the heart of man to give honor and praise to the Creator. Abel's sacrifice reflected the glory of God. The altars of Abraham filled the heavenly realm with sweet incense. Songs of praise rang forth from the glories of the Temple as God's people worshipped Jehovah. On the first day of the first day of the church three thousand devoted Jews learned a new way to worship God. Throughout the pages of the New Testament writers the early church gathered on the first day of the week to sing holy hymns of glory to God remembering the sacrifice of their savior Jesus Christ.

We should never look at the Law of Moses as simply a physical law requiring things to do to please the Lord. There were many regulations to follow but the intent of the Law was to instill in the hearts of the people the universal need of all men to bring their hearts to God. The allurements of idol worship were rooted in the physical satisfaction of a god that was seen and served with the hands of men. Worship to the Almighty has always been about bringing a heart of worship to the throne of the One who made us for glory. Throughout the Law God forbade His children to follow after the gods of the people because it would take their hearts away from Him. He demanded they not worship with such things. It is easy for the child of God today to worship the Lord with the external satisfactions of a religion of works. His will is still that we not worship Him with such things.

What we do today is a heart filled love for a sacrifice so large the world cannot contain its complete message. We are created for glory and standing at the cross of Jesus we see the greatest glory known to man. The first day of the week is a day that should belong to praise and worship of redemption. Salvation is the message of the day. Eternal life fills our hearts with the promise of life after death. Fellowship with saints who love the Lord with all their hearts, souls and minds is the joy of this day. Let us not worship God with such things as the gods of this world. Do not wait for a song to remove the thoughts of the world from our minds. Live each day with Christ. Let today be a resounding chorus of praise for the One who delivered us and saved us from sin. Today is a day of worship!

### **A Meaningful Apology**

A meaningful apology can be the first step toward forgiveness. Colleen O'Connor writes in *The Denver Post*: “The successful apology dissolves anger and humiliation. It shows respect, builds trust, and helps prevent further misunderstanding. A sincere apology makes it much easier to forgive.” Author Barbara Engel says that a true apology depends on the three Rs: regret, responsibility, and remedy.

In Jesus' account of the prodigal son, the headstrong young man who returned home after squandering his inheritance approached his father with humility and remorse: “Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son”

(Luke 15:21). He expressed regret for the pain he had caused, took responsibility for what he had done, and was prepared to work as a hired servant (v.19).

As Christians, we have a responsibility to repent and sincerely say "I'm sorry" whenever we wrong another person. In a spirit of humility and love, we can help those who need to forgive us by offering a genuine apology. A sincere apology doesn't compel others to forgive, but it's the right thing to do. We must take the first step on the pathway toward the freedom of forgiveness.

### **And Earnest Forgiveness**

It was the last weekend of the 1964 baseball season. Bill Valentine was umpiring a game between the Detroit Tigers and the New York Yankees. Dave Wickersham was pitching for Detroit, and he had 19 victories for the season. One more would be the hallmark of stardom. But it wasn't to be.

After a close play, Wickersham tapped the umpire on the shoulder to ask for a time-out. Touching an umpire is against the rules, so Valentine tossed Wickersham from the game, depriving him of his chance for a record 20-win season.

For the next 39 years, Valentine lived with a gnawing regret for booting the pitcher in that split-second decision. But he doesn't carry that regret anymore. In 2003, Wickersham wrote the umpire a letter, telling him he was right in his decision and that he held no hard feelings. That note lifted a great weight from Valentine's shoulders.

In Genesis 45, Joseph lifted the burden of guilt from his brothers for selling him into slavery, something far more serious than a simple misunderstanding. Yet he was willing to forgive them. Is there someone who needs to hear a forgiving word from you that would lift a burden of regret? Isn't it better to live without grudges and hard feelings?

### **A Moments Wisdom**

--There are two kinds of foolish people: One who says, "This is old, therefore it must be good," and the other who says, "This is new, therefore it must be better."

--A good example makes a great sermon.

--Small deeds done are better than great deeds planned.

--The best way to show that a stick is crooked is to lay a straight one beside it; likewise with a doctrine.

--There are no hopeless situations. There are only men who have grown hopeless in them.

--It is not what we have, but what we enjoy, that constitutes our abundance.

--Faults are thick where love is thin.

--Too many folks spend more time watching their health than they do enjoying it.

--Perhaps it is called cold cash because too few people keep it in their pockets long enough for it to warm up.

--Every day we make deposits in the memory banks of our children.

--It is not a good sign when people take their comedians seriously and their politicians as a joke.

--If you do not enjoy what you have, how will you enjoy more?

--Enjoy living in the present moment. These are the "good old days" you will miss in the future.

--Humor is a rubber sword; it allows you to make a point without drawing blood.

--The best employees work for their employers as if they were self-employed.

--Blessed are our enemies, for they often tell us the truth when our friends are flattering us.

--A stiff neck usually supports an empty head.

--As the chest swells, the brain and heart shrink.

--He who sows kindness, reaps a crop of friends.