

Ministers:  
the congregation

Kenny Chumbley  
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Sunday:  
8:00 AM: WGCY  
9:00 AM: Worship

Wednesday:  
7:00 PM: Bible Study

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Christ.com](http://gibsoncitychurchofChrist.com)

**This Past Week:**  
Worship— 12  
Wednesday—  
Contribution—\$

**For meditation:**  
Ecclesiastes 2.24-26  
Even though a  
man cannot take  
the fruits of his  
labor with him,  
how should he live  
his days?

**Radio program:**  
WGCY FM, 106.3  
Sundays at 8 AM

## *The poison of bitterness*

**Looking diligently . . . lest any root of  
bitterness springing up trouble you.**

**Hebrews 12.15**

Have you known that suffocation of the soul known as *bitterness*? It sets in when you feel cheated, done an injustice, denied your due. Bitterness, like grief and fear, is one of those emotions that work against us. Bitterness is a poison, a toxin of our own making that can seep into every relationship we have. As the Hebrews writer warns, bitterness is a weed that, if it goes to seed, will take over and ruin the garden of our life.

I've yet to meet a bitter person who's happy; bitterness and happiness don't blend. Bitter people are miserable. But the gospel can deliver us from this devastating sin.

In Philippians 1.13, Paul speaks of his "bonds in Christ." Paul was in jail, with chains on his wrists and a guard in his room, despite the fact he was an innocent man.

When the Jews tried to kill him in Jerusalem and the Romans took him into protective custody and the captain of the guard soon saw that Paul "had nothing charged against him worthy of death or chains"; yet he was in chains. When Festus heard his case, he said Paul "had committed nothing worthy of death," yet the Jews wanted him dead. And Agrippa agreed with Festus that Paul had done nothing worthy of death or chains, but he was in chains.

Injustice is a strong temptation to bitterness, but Paul refused to be bitter.

If bitterness plagues you, quit wasting your life on misery. Understand how Paul, the victim of gross injustice, could rejoice. Imitate him. And then see how your life becomes immeasurably better.

kenny

# Gibson City church of Christ

Highway 47 South, Gibson City, IL

**WHERE EROSION HAS NO EFFECT**



*"THE WORLD PASSETH AWAY, AND THE LUST  
THEREOF: BUT HE THAT DOETH THE WILL  
OF GOD ABIDETH FOR EVER"*

*JACK HANAM* *— I JOHN 2:17*

Sermon: James 4.1-4

## The not-so-good fight

16 February 2025

## ***Books worth reading, part 5***

### **BIBLE SURVEYS**

There are many books that summarize or outline Biblical books. I'm fairly ignorant about recent surveys or introductions to the Bible, but among the older ones, I recommend the following.

#### **Old Testament**

***Explore the Book*** by J. Sidlow Baxter, offers excellent synopses and outlines for every book of the Bible.

***The Living Messages of the Books of the Bible*** by G. Campbell Morgan, "the Prince of the Expositors." Some of Morgan's books are very good; some not so much. This volume contains enough nuggets of insight to justify acquiring and using it.

***With the Word*** by Warren Wiersbe, an outstanding Biblical expositor. Every book and every chapter of every book is succinctly summarized and outlined. When I'm wanting a brief but encompassing survey of a Bible book, New or Old, this is the first volume I pull from the shelf.

#### **New Testament**

***Survey of the Bible*** by William Hendriksen. Though a Calvinist and premillennialist, Hendriksen had some memorable outlines of Bible books. For over fifty years, I've used his outline of 1 Corinthians, which I can still recall by memory: chs. 1–4, contention; ch. 5, fornication; ch. 6, litigation; ch. 7, marriage; chs. 8–10, meats; ch. 11, meetings; chs. 12–14, manifold gifts; ch. 15, mystery of the resurrection; ch. 16, material assistance.

***The Genius of the Gospels*** by Merrill C. Tenney, a must read.

***Introduction to the New Testament*** by George Salmon. There isn't one preacher in a carload who's heard of the great Irish Anglican scholar, George Salmon, but his book, *The Infallibility of the Church*, is the definitive refutation of Catholicism (the 1910 Catholic Encyclopedia called Salmon "one of the subtlest of the recent opponents of infallibility," Vol. VII, 794). Salmon's *Introduction* is an enriching read.

***The Synoptic Gospels and the Book of Acts, John and His Writings, and The New Testament Epistles*** by Doremus A. Hayes. I read everything I can find by Doremus Hayes.

***Matthew, The Genesis of the New Testament*** by Henry G. Weston. There's more brilliance in this little book on Matthew's Gospel than any other I've read (including mine!).

kenny

## ***Thorns***

**"Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth," Genesis 3.18**

Over the winter, our Wednesday night class has studied Genesis 1–4, not as the history of creation but as a preview of a new creation that introduces every singular aspect of the gospel. I've talked about some of these items in past bulletins. In this entry, I'll attempt to say something helpful about *thorns*.

Thorns are part of God's curse on the earth due to man's sin. They add to man's troubles. They choke out more beneficial plants (Matt. 13.22). They're nothing to look at. They can draw blood. There's no perfume to them. I've never seen an arrangement of thorns at a wedding or funeral, or pinned on a tuxedo.

But here's what I read in 2 Corinthians 12.7: "a thorn in the flesh was given me." Paul's thorn was a gift from God. Imagine that! Paul has just talked about being "*exalted above measure* by the *abundance* of the revelations." Isn't the Christian life to be lived in an "exalted-above-measure-abundant" place? That's what I thought, but here's God telling Paul his *abundance* was a danger and his *abasement* a blessing.

In God giving Adam a thorn as a curse and Paul a thorn as a blessing, I think we have grounds for considering how God can bring blessing out of brokenness and abundance out of adversity.

We reach a high level of spiritual maturity when we realize our thorns can be blessings in disguise and great pain can be God's gift to save us from greater pain. It's easy to see strength in the weakness of Christ's cross, but do we see the cross we're carrying as a present glory? [**The Gr. word translated *thorn* referred not to a bramble or thistle but to a type of cross that was a pointed stake.**] By faith, do we see our Valley of Achor/Trouble as a Door of Hope (Hos. 2.15)?

I often struggle to see my troubles as a gift of divine love meant to strengthen me. I often find it difficult to boast in my infirmities and count it all joy when I fall into divers temptations.

But I hope to get there. Lord, increase my faith.

kenny

### ***News about us***

- The last word I got was that Grant and Tamee's grandson was showing some improvement from his flu symptoms.
- Keep Verna and her sister in your prayers.