

Ministers:
the congregation

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

Wednesday:
7:00 PM: Bible Study

[gibsoncitychurchof
Christ.com](http://gibsoncitychurchofchrist.com)

This Past Week:
Worship-28
Wednesday-13
Contribution-\$

For meditation:
Ecclesiastes 7.1-2
What does it mean
to have a "good
name." What does
having a good name
prepare us for?

Radio program:
WGCY FM, 106.3
Sundays at 8 AM

The tree of life

Virtually no one today has heard of him, but Lewis Bayly was an Anglican clergyman whose book, *Practice of Piety*, was once considered one of the greatest devotional books ever written. John Bunyan's wife had a copy of it when she and John married, and it became one of the major influences in Bunyan's spiritual awakening and his writing of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, which has sold over a quarter of a billion copies since its publication.

Near the end of the book is a chapter titled, "A Divine Colloquy Between the Soul and Her Saviour Upon the Effectual Merits of His Dolorous Passion," consisting of a question-and-answer session between Christ and an individual. Here's a short excerpt that hits me especially hard.

**Soule. Lord, wherefore was Thy
side opened with a speare?**

**Christ. That thou mightiest have
a way to come nearer to My
heart.**

This may be my favorite explanation of the atonement. I don't have to understand how something functions (like the GPS on my phone) in order to enjoy its functionality. Likewise, I don't have to get theological and explain the unexplainable mysteries of the atonement to understand that what happened on the tree of shame was a Divine GPS that directs me to where I want to go (Heb. 10.19-21).

It's enough for me to know that the dead stake on which my Savior died was, in fact, the tree of life that enables me to draw near to the heart of God.

kenny

Gibson City church of Christ

Highway 47 South, Gibson City, IL

Give to the winds thy fears;
Hope, and be undismayed;
God hears thy sighs, and counts thy tears,
God shall lift up thy head.
Through waves, through clouds, through storms,
He gently clears the way.
Wait thou his time; so shall the night
Soon end in joyous day.

Paul Gerhardt, 1606-1676

Sermon: Hebrews 11.13-14

The tenacity of faith

14 September 2025

Jesus saw Himself as the stronger man

But when a stronger than [the strong man] comes upon him and overcomes him . . . Luke 11.21–22

When men depict Jesus, they often describe/paint Him as almost effeminate or the “pale Galilean” (in the words of the degenerate English poet Algernon Swinburne). But I can’t find anywhere in the Gospels where Christ thought of Himself like this. Rather, in Matthew 12.29 and Luke 11.21–22, He saw Himself as a Champion who was stronger than a strong man.

Those suffering JDS—Jesus Derangement Syndrome—were trying to account for what He was doing. The cleansings, cures, and exorcisms He wrought were stubborn facts that couldn’t be denied or ignored. Herod tried to explain Christ’s deeds by a miracle: “This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead, and therefore these powers are at work in him” (Matt. 14.2). The Pharisees, like the witch-hunters and witch-burners of other times, tried to explain Christ’s power by an unholy alliance between Him and the devil (Matt. 12.24).

The Lord exposed the utter stupidity of this theory (12.25–26) and then gave the true explanation for His works: He wasn’t merely the enemy of evil but its Master! Not only could He proclaim liberty to the captives, He could liberate them (Lk. 4.18).

THE STRONG MAN

The devil is a strong man. If you doubt it, try expelling him from your heart. The Scottish preacher Thomas Boston honestly admitted: “I found that it was no easy thing to part with sin: I saw it was as easy for a rock to raise itself as for me to raise my heart from sin to holiness.” Not only is Satan stronger than us, he’s stronger than all of us put together. “The whole world lieth in wickedness” (1 Jn. 5.19).

THE STRONGER MAN

But despite Satan’s strength, when Christ arrived, He disarmed him as easily as taking candy from a baby. Christ’s victory is inevitable because this world is governed upon a righteous basis. At the heart of reality is justice, and no weaponry that is unrighteous and based on lies or evil can stand against it. The fight may be long and the victory slow, but the triumph will belong to the sheer, invincible, divine right of justice, righteousness, and truth. The Lion of the tribe of Judah is stronger than the great dragon. To Christ is the kingdom, *and the power*, and the glory, forever! Amen and Amen!

kenny

“This present evil world-order”

Christ . . . delivered us from this present evil age.

Galatians 1.4

Check the lexicons and I think you’ll see that “present evil age” (NKJV) is a better translation than “present evil world” (KJV) and that “present evil world-order” (JBP) is a good paraphrase of “present evil age.”

The *present evil age* refers to a *worldview*: the defining spirit or mood of a particular period of history based on the ideas and beliefs of the time—“the Dark Age,” “the Gilded Age,” “the Jazz Age,” etc. “Age,” as used by Paul, is the societal-moral-spiritual atmosphere into which we’re born into and breathe so unconsciously that it becomes a part of us, every bit as much as the blood in our veins or the marrow in our bones.

About the world order, here are three thoughts.

First, whatever age we’re born into becomes our “norm.”

When the Founding Fathers legalized slavery in the newly formed United States, it wasn’t because they were evil racists, they were just products of their time. In the same way, Mark Twain used words in his books (e.g., *Huckleberry Finn*) he would never use today. When J. M. Barrie, in *Peter Pan*, has Peter kill the Lost Boys who showed signs of growing up, it wasn’t because he was some sick psychopath, he was simply using some levity that was acceptable then that would be found offensive today.

In the Sixties, when the Beatles burst on the scene, many of the good, moral folks believed they epitomized adolescent rebellion and sinfulness. Nowadays, we see pictures of the Beatles from 1964 and they look like decent, well-groomed young men whose music has become the staple of easy listening FM stations. When I watch an old movie and people are smoking, especially if women are smoking, I’m almost always shocked, until I remember the “times have changed.” It’s nearly impossible to escape the fact that we are the children of our age—even Andy Taylor would tell a lie in Mayberry if it helped him out of a tight or embarrassing spot.

The first step in not loving the world or the things of the world is to realize that our *present*—even the present when Eisenhower was president and we watched Ed Sullivan on Sunday nights—is full of moral blind spots, foolishness, double-standards, lack of perspective, apathy, out-and-out evil, etc.

I’ll pick this up next article, God enabling.

kenny