

**New Caney  
Church of Christ**

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**Assembly Times**

*Sundays*  
Bible Class 9:30 a.m.  
Worship 10:30 a.m.  
*Wednesdays*  
Bible Classes 7:00 p.m.

***Retaining The Standard  
Of Sound Doctrine***

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**Know Your Bible: Answers**

1. Saul (1 Samuel 28:8)
2. David (1 Samuel 21:21-25)
3. King Josiah (2 Chronicles 35)
4. Jeroboam's (1 Kings 14:1-6)
5. His wife Rebekah (Genesis 26)

**This Week's Assignments & Events**

**Sunday Worship**

Greeter: Tyler Blazek  
Announcements: Brad Smith  
Encouragement Talk: John Franks  
Opening Prayer: Todd McAdams  
Scripture Reading: Eddie Bowen  
Philippians 4:1-9  
Song Leader: Ryan Haarmann  
Table Talk: Robert McCorkle  
Contribution: Arturo Orozco  
Helper: Corwin Richardson  
Fruit of Vine: Josh Emerson  
Helper: Chris Beard  
Helper: Jonathan Lovell  
Closing Prayer: Billy Lovell

**Sunday Afternoons**

May 7 Nothing  
May 14 Nothing  
May 21 3PM Bible Fundamentals Class  
Parent planned youth devotional  
May 28 4PM Singing with Donal Hejl

**Wednesday Evening**

Song Leader: Arturo Orozco  
Speaker: Harper Flores



# Standing Firm

“Take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist  
in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm”  
Ephesians 6:13

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## Finding Contentment In God's Grace

All too easily forgotten in our longing for the love of God are the words of Prov. 3:12: *“For whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives.”* As a consequence we can feel decidedly betrayed when we are called upon to suffer, sometimes quite painfully, because we are God's children. We may even begin to wish that God did not love us quite so much. But obviously pain has an important part to play in God's loving purpose for His children, and there is much to learn from the life and writings of Paul about how to deal with suffering, not just with patience but with thanksgiving and joy.

Suffering was largely foreign to Paul's early life as a zealous Pharisee. A staunch defender of the faith of his fathers he was revered and respected, and on a fast track to becoming one of ancient Judaism's most celebrated rabbis (Gal. 1: 14; Phil. 3:4-6). Yet, as a Christian, pain and suffering of every sort dogged him relentlessly until his physically and materially wretched life (2 Cor. 11:23-27) was ended by Caesar's sword (2 Tim. 4:6). Such is hardly the kind of life, and death, that we as Christians would choose. Hardly the sort of life we would call a model of God's marvelous grace at work. Yet that is exactly how Paul saw it. And in Paul's view of suffering for the Lord's sake is found, without doubt, the reason he was able to endure so much inward pain and outward conflict undaunted and without the remotest bit of self-pity or regret.

Second Corinthians is known for being the most open hearted of all Paul's epistles. In this letter he speaks openly and often of his suffering. It stuns us a bit to read these catalogues of adversity (chs. 1,4,6,11,12) because they are so uncharacteristic. Ordinarily Paul found it both uncomfortable and unprofitable to speak about what he had suffered as an apostle of Christ. We might be made to wonder if too many battles have taken their toll on an old warrior but a careful reading of 2 Corinthians will show that the very opposite is true. The truth is that he saw his tribulations as expressions of the grace of God, and he wanted the Corinthians to see that it was not only true for him but for themselves as well. *“And our hope for you is steadfast... that as you are partakers of the sufferings, so also you will partake of the consolation”* (1:7).

Paul's overwhelming burdens in Asia, that made him despair even of life, were seen as a blessing in all directions. They taught him to trust God and not in himself (1:9). They comforted him because they were *“the sufferings of Christ”* (1:5). They prepared him to be a

comfort to others who were also going through the fire (1:4). And isn't it remarkable that it was amidst such suffering that he was able to say quite joyfully, *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort"* (1:3).

In chapter four (vss. 7-11) Paul sees his outwardly pathetic state as graphic evidence that the power of the gospel was in the message not the messenger. He viewed his patient endurance of hardships and privation as a means of proving his selfless love for those he taught (6:3-10) and his suffering and distress as evidence that he was a true servant and apostle of Christ (11:23-33). He was, he said, suffering and dying with Christ so that he might live with Him (2 Cor. 4:10, 11; Gal. 2:20); and he rejoiced in it!

It is near the end of his letter that Paul reveals an early experience that is all likelihood shaped his remarkable response to a lifetime of suffering (12:1-10). Fourteen years before, likely during his retreat in Tarsus (Acts 9:30), he had been caught into paradise to hear wonderful things that he was forbidden to utter. But from those exhilarating heights Satan had brought him down by some unidentified but very painful "thorn in the flesh." He evidently saw his infirmity as a deterrent to his apostolic calling and earnestly besought the Lord three times to draw it out; and three times he was refused. The Lord's answer was *"My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness."* Satan's aim was certainly malevolent but God's was gracious, to prevent in Paul an overweening pride.

Every since, Paul wrote, he had rejoiced *"infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake"* because it was in his weakness that he was made strong (2 Cor. 12:10). Paul realized as we all must that until we are emptied of ourselves God cannot fill us, and, until we know our own inadequacy, His great power cannot work to transform and make us a blessing to others. We have at last to realize that God's grace is sufficient for us even when suffering comes that we do not understand and that He does not take away. Trusting in God's goodness and the love of His Son we can know as Paul did in the midst of pain that *"all things will work together for good"* (Rom. 8:28) and that our light and momentary afflictions are working for us *"a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory"* (2 Cor. 4:17).

By Paul Earnhart

## Know Your Bible

### Impersonators

1. What king disguised himself to consult with a sorceress?
2. Who pretended to be a madman to escape from King Achish?
3. Who disguised himself while going to battle against the forces of Pharaoh Neco?
4. What king's wife disguised herself to consult with the prophet Ahijah?
5. Who posed as Isaac's sister?

Answers On Back

### Sunday Sermon

Point your phone camera at the square below, then click on the link to hear the sermon. Recordings will change mid-week.



## Satan's Goals

by Charles Willis

The world, with its great confidence in science, would have us believe God and Satan are a myth. We are supposedly better informed today and do not need to rely on superstitious beings created by the imagination of men. This concept is supposedly pointing to how we have progressed to a better place than previous generations. This is the real myth, because Satan is real and seeks to defeat us.

Satan is called the *"father of lies"* and *"there is no truth in him"* (John 8:44), and he *"deceives the whole world"* (Rev. 12:9). He desires to convince us of his lies. He does not want us to know the truth. What greater example of his success can be given than that modern people think God and Satan are a myth? His methods and actions are always the same, he has not changed. Jesus said *"he was a murderer from the beginning"* (John 8:44). This refers to Genesis 3 where Satan is described as being *"more crafty than any beast of the field."* He boldly lied to Eve saying *"you surely will not die"* if you eat of the forbidden tree (Gen. 3:4). Her belief in the lie led her to eat the fruit, and to give to Adam and he ate. Curses from God came upon them for their sin.

Satan continues to be the father of lies. God sent His Son to die for the sins of mankind. Through obedience to the gospel we can receive the forgiveness of our sin. We must then live in righteousness to the new covenant in Christ Jesus. Satan wants us to disbelieve this. Paul wrote by inspiration that Satan has *"blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ"* (2 Corinthians 4:4). To the same congregation he wrote again saying, *"as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ"* (2 Corinthians 11:3). Many people today have been blinded so they do not see the light of the gospel, and many who believed have been led astray by his crafty deceptions. *"Satan comes and takes away the word which has been sown in them"* (Mark 4:15). Satan *"hindered"* Paul from going to Thessalonica more than once (1 Thess. 2:18). Satan desires to stop God's work, to prevent the gospel from being known, to cause believer's to quit and pursue their lusts.

*"We are not ignorant of his schemes"* (2 Corinthians 2:11). We know that Satan is real, we know what he wants, and we know he works through crafty deception. He is active in false religions (2 Cor. 11:13-15) promoting lies. Our struggle is *"against world forces of this darkness"* (Eph. 6:12) which is seen in many governments and rulers who lie and work to approve sin and prevent the truth of God from being known. God has authority over Satan and has limited his ability to destroy us. *"Resist the devil and he will flee from you"* (James 4:7). We must use *"the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one"* (Eph. 6:16). Knowing his craftiness and lies, we must be of *"sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in your faith"* (1 Pet. 5:8-9). God will *"not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it"* (1 Cor. 10:13). The only way Satan can succeed is if we listen to the lie, believe the lie, and choose to sin against God. *"Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil"* (Eph. 6:11)!