

We are continuing in our study of James today and the title of the message is, ironically in its way, “Keeping Good Company”. I have for the past five days kept good company. Some time you might want to chat with Nini and me about some of the attendant circumstances of our trip. We had some remarkable evidences of God’s grace covering us and taking care of matters. Yesterday we had a long day. You will have to be patient with me, I pray you will be. We did not get home and to bed until midnight and as usual I was up at four. Consequently I may babble. But I will attempt not to do that.

“Keeping Good Company”: can you say that? I can say that; I can say that this past week I kept good company. I kept good company even in a situation – this is one of my objections to cruises – in which it would have been easy not to keep good company and to not do good things. Twenty-four hours a day there is food and booze available and equally emphasized. “Keeping Good Company”: what does it take to keep good company? I think it takes something like this: you have to keep in front of yourself clarity as to who you are, to whom you belong and why you are about what you are about. Sometimes we think that the answer to the challenge of living a holy life in this world is to withdraw, to hide, to close doors, to get behind protective barriers so that we don’t have to deal with things. That of course is a failing proposition. If there are going to be walls, they are walls built within your heart protecting you against the seductions of an evil world. You need to know how to stand and say no to what needs to be refused and yes to what needs to be done.

This relates profoundly, does it not, to what James is try to get across to us as he addresses us, particularly at this time as we are looking at 4:6-10. This is that statement; we have looked at it before. Now again let the Lord speak to us by His Spirit.

*“He gives more grace. Therefore it says, ‘God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.’ Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts you double-minded. Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.”*

One of the most cherished portions of scripture I am quite sure is the account of the angel Gabriel’s first conversation with Mary, the young Jewish girl who was to become the mother of Jesus. You can find this at Luke 1:26-38. We are familiar with this passage.

*“In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin’s name was Mary. And he came to her and said, ‘Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!’” But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, ‘Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.’ And Mary said to the angel, ‘How will this be, since I am a virgin?’ And the angel answered her, ‘The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God. And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her*

*who was called barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.’ And Mary said, ‘behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.’ And the angel departed from her.”*

It is a beautiful story. I suspect that many of us have reflected upon it and considered what it says about the character of this particular woman chosen by God to be the vehicle of the most important person to be born upon the face of the earth. Certainly we should perceive that at the heart of her qualities is submission. “Let it be to me as you have said.” “You have called, I answer.” “You have said, this way, I go this way.” Grace calls us to submission. We hear that in James 4:5-7. Hear it again. *“He gives more grace. Therefore it says, ‘God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.’”* Then the next word, the command, is “submit.” *“Submit yourselves therefore to God.”*

I think I can safely say most of us would agree that grace is easy, submission is hard. As we noted last week, pride is at the root of the problem. We have a kind of automatic resistance to submission of any sort. We like to think of ourselves as able, competent, even self-sufficient. We like to see ourselves as in charge of our own lives, calling our own shots. The natural tendency is powerfully reinforced by our cultural values. It is not any more so much that Americans like to think of themselves as “rugged individualists”, that is a passing sort of perception. Rather we just don’t like other people telling us what to do, how to feel or what to think. We like to be our own.

What has happened in the pursuit of personal freedom is increasing dread and fear of getting too close to anyone, and that includes God. I have had occasion more than once, I did on this trip, to talk about God and to watch people who know me instantly shy away. We prefer living on our own, with our own impressions and our own opinions. It has often been observed about Americans that we are outwardly friendly and inwardly lonely. If we are lonely it is because we have a reluctance to draw close enough that others can actually reach the inner core of who we are and draw us into a relationship that binds us together with others. We like to remain apart.

When we are in our right minds we know that such privacy and autonomy is neither reasonable nor possible. What we do not always consider is attempting to live with such personal space and distance is also dangerous. Why would it be dangerous? What James says next in this little passage is a warning as much as it is a directive. He says that we are to resist the devil. Resist the devil: This is a danger we think too little of. We might wonder if we are reading through the letter of James why he decides to mention the devil now when earlier, in chapter I he discusses the whole matter of temptations and he never mentions the devil once. Well the point that we recognized when we looked at those earlier verses, 1:13-15, is that we don’t need the devil to get ourselves in trouble. We are quite capable of conjuring up all manner of temptations and engaging in all kinds of activities that are ruinous in their outcome regardless of how delightful they are in their prospect. So why bring up Satan now? James doesn’t say, so we need to think about it. I think the way to approach this is to ask ourselves what we have heard before but always need to remind [ourselves of]: how does Satan work? How does he accomplish his ends, his goals? We are told two fundamental things about him. Jesus at one point says that Satan is the father of lies. On another occasion Paul said that he is the prince of the power of the air, he who dominates this age. Let me ask you a question: how common is lying in our age? How common is misrepresentation through all the official channels of communication? How often do we resort to misrepresentation in order to accomplish our purposes?

There is another means that Satan uses. This is brought to our attention in Hebrews 2:14-15. It is the fear of death. This is what the author of Hebrews says: *“Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he likewise*

*partook of the same thing so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to life-long slavery.”* That is not an easy statement to follow through to its full meaning. We ask ourselves, what exactly is it that is being set in front of our understanding so that it would guide us in our self-management, as it were? How does the fear of death. . . I mean does anybody fear dying soon? No. Does anybody think they are not going to die? No. Are we afraid of dying in the end? Well, probably not. So what is this? We spoke of this before when we did the study of Hebrews and it is good to be reminded, is it not? The fear of death has to do with the fear of “running out”. It has to do with the fear of insufficiency. It has to do with the fear that I am running out of time and I will not be able to go, see and do what I want, that all of my dreams will not come to fruition; that my desires for fulfillment will never be realized. Ah! It is the recognition that we live under the shadow of something that obscures the glory and goodness of life. We half see it under the veil of death’s presence and we say to ourselves we are not sure we will ever reach what is wanted, and we will be left forever empty. That is correct. That is a description of eternal death: an endless decrease in what we are. How many of us have resorted to lying to get something we would lose if we didn’t get it now? How many of us operate under the constraint of time’s limitation, and consequently move from faith to force, to quickly accomplish goals we no longer trust God will allow to come to pass in our lives? Ah! Death is pervasive in our culture not because we have a rational comprehension and a spiritually grounded sense of peace regarding it, knowing the triumph over death that is ours in Christ, but because on the practical level we are not faithful but fearful, and therefore often driven to do things which we otherwise would not do.

How does Satan work? The devil uses lies and fear to control people. What this, then, is translated into is concepts of persuasion. He persuades us. He clouds our minds so that we do not have a clear and consistent vision of what we know is ultimately true. Therefore we become occupied with intermediate goals that cause us to drop away from our awareness of the long-range purpose for which we know that God has called us. He distorts our thinking so that consequently things of passing importance become very important; matters of eternal import fade and we find ourselves running as it were from pillar to post, chasing after things that right now seem pressing, but how often afterwards we realize we have spent ourselves to capture that which simply fades away and becomes nothing. He clouds our minds, distorts our thinking and convinces us of things that are not true: those who are under his dominion see the world through misrepresentations and deceptions, but of course they do not think this. On the contrary, those who are under his persuasion think that they have the facts, that they are on to something, that they have a clearer view of reality than others do. Part of our week was spent with people who hold precisely these persuasions. And of course they are wrong. They don’t [have such superior insight or understanding.] Rarely do people in the world think they are being deceived; even more rarely do they think of Satan. For most of them the idea of an evil being preying upon their minds, deceiving them, stirring up in them fears is a laughable notion. It ought not to be for us.

James extends a promise to us in the form of an affirmation, a simply statement of future truth. Oftentimes scripture does this and you find this in this passage. *“Resist the devil. . .”* And what will happen? He will flee! That is an extremely encouraging observation. That is a future reality that all of us should be very excited about. That is great. How does it work? What exactly does this mean? We are told that one of the great saints of the church at one point picked up an inkpot and threw it at Satan. He missed! That was Luther. I look forward to talking with Luther. I am on the right side of the inkpot, by the way and won’t have to worry about him tossing it at me.

What does it mean to resist the devil? Closer to what James intends is what we hear in the “Just say no” campaigns. Are you familiar with a temptation in your life? [Just say] no. I can give a list of temptations that touch most of us at one point or another. It is extremely unwise to try and out argue a temptation. It is better just to say no. Rarely if ever can we deal directly with the devil, nor should we look for the opportunity. We speak too lightly of him; he is deadly dangerous. He is smarter than we are. He is God’s arch enemy and he is the enemy of our souls, and he is incomparably stronger and smarter than we are. Don’t ever think we can resist the devil by standing up to him [on our own]. So what [are we to do]? It seems to me, beloved, that if we are grounded in the Word of God and walk with the Spirit of truth then we can say “no” to his deceptions, his enticements, to his false promises and all the rest of the disinformation by which he seeks to mess with our lives.

Why keep reading the Bible? Most of you know I read the Bible approximately one and a half to two times a year, every year. You would think I would know it by now. I have been doing it for forty years. Why [do I do this]? [It is so that] I can say “No”. I just want to be sure I can say “No”. I often pray for mental clarity. What I mean by that is a clear remembrance of what God has said so that I am not fooled by what the world says. I spend a lot of my time finding out what the world has to say. Because I do I know that it is important that I have a very consistent and clear knowledge of what God has said so that I don’t get confused. If we are grounded in the Bible and walk with the Spirit of truth we can say no to the devil’s deceptions, to his enticements, to his false promises and all the rest of the disinformation by which he seeks to mess with our lives.

But this itself is not sufficient. You and I both know, no doubt have known individuals who have a remarkable grasp of the Word of God but do not know how to say no. In addition to knowing the word you need to know the Spirit of truth. The devil does not fear inkpots. What does the devil fear that makes him flee? John at the beginning of his gospel says this in John 3:20, *“For everyone who does wicked things hates the light.”* Specifically, *“...he does not come to the light lest his works should be exposed.”* The devil fears the light, especially the divine light of the Son of God. Consequently to study the Word is only a portion of what needs to be done. You ask for the Spirit of God to fill you and give you a comprehension of the Word so that you now become indwelt and filled with the light of His truth and His presence. It is the light of His presence that will cause the devil to flee. You do not concentration on the devil; you concentrate on the light which has been given to you so that you can live, and as you let your mind and your heart be filled with the glory and the goodness of the light and the truth that has been given to us and let that light shine into us, then there is no room for Satan, and he will flee. He fears the divine light. It is a simple truth: as we draw near to God, not only will God draw near to us; the devil will flee. We are never told to argue with the devil. We are not even told to cast him out in this instance. Remember that James is writing his letter to people who are presently sunk in sin and guilt and their prayer lives are a mess. That is what this fourth chapter is talking about. These are hardly the people to stand up and resist the devil. Jesus is our champion: rely on Him! So if you feel tempted, ask the Spirit of God to awaken your mind to remember what is written and in any case fall on your knees and say Lord Jesus Christ, be here with me, hold my hands, shield my eyes, quiet my heart, silence the voice of temptation within me and let me walk in the power of the Spirit out of this place and to wherever I need to go in order to remain faithful to what you want me to do.

That is what James goes on in verses 8-10 to tell us. Drawing near to God takes more by the way than just praying or sitting in a church or reading the Bible, all of which I have just touched upon. Notice what he says in verses 8-10, *“Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you*

*double-minded. Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.*” Oops! We have just traveled out of 21<sup>st</sup> century America into someplace hardly any of us want to go. We are the proponents of “happy religion”. We are the proponents of the religion of peace and quiet and personal affirmation and personal fulfillment. We are not the proponents of a religion that says we are to be broken hearted, weep and wail, cast ourselves down in misery and let our joy be turned to gloom because we recognize the reality of sin in our lives. Oh no, we are not the proponents of that religion! At least 21<sup>st</sup> century Americans are not proponents of that religion. For all that we are called saints in scripture it is critical to remember that we are sinners saved by grace. We are not holy ones who occasionally stumble. That, by the way, is most of [our] self-concept: basically got it together and an occasional slip. But scripture’s image of us is those who but for the grace of God continually pulling us, we would be moving in the other direction. The importance of this lies in what is needed [for] the proper understanding of the challenge we face in heeding James’ advice to resist the devil and draw near to God. As sinners we habitually lean in Satan’s direction. As Paul said of himself in Romans 7:21-23: *“So I find it to be a law – not an occasional impulse, not a “now and then” thing, but a law – that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God in my inner being, but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members.”* Well that is a description of us, not of people down the street. It is important for us therefore to keep clear that sin is not an occasional impulse in our lives. It is instead a militant force within us opposing the will of God, and it does so, of course by playing on and with our desires. So how do we draw near to God? We have talked of a number of things: you know the word, you rely upon the Holy Spirit, you remember who you are; you appeal to God to be with you and to walk with you. That is what James says here: we need to cleanse our hands, to purify our hearts.

I John 1: 8-9 puts it this way: *“If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”* That is a hallelujah verse! We know that Jesus’ death on the cross has freed us from guilt and the power of sin, reconciled us to God. This is the glorious truth of our salvation. But it is a truth which needs to be applied from our side as it has already been applied from God’s side. What God from eternity has done for us through Jesus Christ, once and for all through the death and resurrection of Jesus, we must claim and apply repeatedly if we are going to truly claim the victory over sin and the devil which is ours in Christ. How many times did Jesus die on the cross? Once, sufficient for all. How many times do you and I have to die to sin? Daily. How many times [daily]? If we neglect that discipline, if we neglect that perspective, if we neglect that understanding, if we develop an assumption that it is ok with me, where will we end up? Dead, long-distanced from God. The voice [of God] silenced and filled with our own conversation congratulating ourselves on how well we have done.

We [still] have to walk another step. Repentance and confession: that is what James is driving at. James describes it as being wretched, mourning, weeping, our joy being turned to gloom. As I mentioned before I suspect that strikes many of us as rather extreme. Can’t we just say, “Pardon me!” and then move on? I fear we have become strangers to the power of true repentance. How often have we been told that repentance is basically just “re-thinking” a 180 degree turn around and so very easy? There are three realities on a cruise ship. If you love cruises please forgive me: I don’t. So there are three realities that became instantaneously clear to me and with which I needed to deal according to my own dispositions. You can gamble anytime you want to, because there is a casino. You can drink because drinks were offered in every possible place on that boat. And of course you can eat forever. What does it

take to say no? What does it take to say “no” after you said “yes”? The difficult “no” is not first time round. That is glorious; that is empowering; that is affirming; that is the “No!” But when [“no”] comes after “yes”, that is a very different matter. For when it comes after “yes” it must cry, it must come with the cry, “Lord, have mercy on me!” Because if it does not, then “yes” will follow “no” and the cycle is one of destruction. It is a matter of the understanding and the will, we say, and that is true. I know that there are things that I can and that I cannot eat, and that if I eat them I am in trouble. So I don’t eat them. I know that it is foolishness to gamble. So I don’t. I have long since settled the issue as to whether or not I will ever drink alcoholic beverages, and I don’t. It is a done deal. But this is only a partial truth, this matter of the will and the understanding. I fear we greatly underestimate the realities of sin as well as misunderstanding the dynamics of desire in our souls. There are other and more subtle sins than the easy ones I named.

In 2 Corinthians 7:8-10 Paul makes a contrast between two kinds of repentance. He calls them godly and earthly. This is what he says, *“For even if I made you grieve with my letter, I do not regret it—though I did regret it. For I see that that letter grieved you, though only for a while. As it is, I rejoice, not because you were grieved, but because you were grieved into repenting. For you felt a godly grief, so that you suffered no loss through us. For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death.”* We have dealt with grief before. It is a poignant sadness or sense of loss through bereavement, that is, something has died. Because it is poignant we know that what has been lost was highly valued. Paul wrote a letter which brought grief to the Corinthians. They were stunned by what he had to say regarding them. Paul says, however, it was a healing grief, because it awakened in them an awareness of the danger that they were in. So Paul went on immediately to say (v. 11), *“For see what this earnestness, this godly grief, has produced in you. . .”* eager to clear yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal! What Paul has named are powerful emotions and those emotions are not irrelevant. He says, “What I perceive is that you have been grieved to the point of repentance.” Confronted with the truth, the Corinthians could not endure the cost of their continued sin. They remembered Paul’s love for them and they knew that love originated in God. It was God’s love for them and they did not want to lose that love. They came to their senses under the influence of those powerful emotions. We have to ask ourselves a question: If we find no occasion for mourning or weeping over the condition of our souls, has our love for God diminished as well? I think that is a serious question.

What Paul is giving to us in 2 Corinthians 7 is what I would call a reasoned appeal for an emotionally intense response to sin. We hear the same in 1 Peter 5:6-7. Listen to what Peter says: *“Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on Him, because He cares for you.”* I fear that so often we take the last phrase, “. . .he cares for you” and assume that therefore we need fear nothing at all and we drift happily without much second thought. That does not seem a plausible response to the reality of sin in the presence of a holy God.

There is a name for what Paul describes in 2 Corinthians 7:11. It is called reconciliation. It is one thing, beloved, to say you are sorry regarding what you have said or done that has wounded a brother or sister in the Lord, it is quite another thing to go further and not only make amends – I am sorry. The Old Testament refers to this as “restoration.” Restoration inevitably meant increased cost. You had to add a fifth to the value of whatever it was you messed up. Think about that in emotional terms, which is where we live our lives. So it is one thing to say, “I’m sorry”, and quite another thing to say, “Let’s work together to mend the breach as servants and friends and

members of the Lord’s family.” Occasionally, maybe once a year, I do something wrong relative to my wife. It is one thing for me to say, “Nini, I am sorry.” It is another thing for me to say, “Can we work together and...” It is one thing for someone to say, “I am sorry I disappointed the committee.” It is another thing for the committee to say, “Alright, let’s deal with the matter, work out our differences and move forward.” Those are simple: It is one thing for someone to be caught in adultery and say, “I am sorry,” and for the body of Christ then to embrace them and say, “Let’s work it out and walk together in serving our God.” Oh!

The end point of repentance is reconciliation. It is reestablishing a living relationship with God, and there is only one way we can have that relationship with God, and that is by entering into a living relationship with God’s people. If you do not do that, the rest is blowing smoke. Paul speaks of something he calls the ministry of reconciliation. He did this a bit earlier in 2 Corinthians 5:16-21. Listen to what he says.

*“From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”*

Please notice that in that remarkable and glorious passage God has done two things. He has reconciled us to Himself in Christ. Amen? And He has given us the ministry of reconciliation. Amen? If we are reconciled we are new creatures. If we are reconciled, God does not count our sins against us. What God has done is finished. The ministry He has given to us is ongoing. But please recognize Paul writes this letter, 2 Corinthians, to a church, to a bunch of Christians, presumably. Therefore he is not making his appeal to non-Christians. Rather he is making his appeal to believers in the church. *“...we are ambassadors for Christ, God making His appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to Christ.”* “You” who? You Corinthian believers! “You” who? You Orovillian attenders of this congregation! Are you reconciled to God? Do you walk with Him? Do you love Him? Do you embrace Him? When you fall short, when you turn your back on Him, do you grieve over the reality of sin? For He does; He grieves. Shouldn’t we? Indeed shouldn’t we grieve enough so that we change, so that the grief is more painful than the sin was pleasurable? Shouldn’t that be, at least isn’t that what James is saying to us?

We cannot seriously doubt that Paul’s intent here is that the Corinthians will understand that to be reconciled with God, they must be reconciled both to one another and to him as God’s servants. We hear the same truth in I John 4:19-21. *“We love because he first loved us. If anyone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen.”* You do notice the verb: cannot. So if you hate your brother and say, “I love God,” you are blowing smoke. That’s all it is: you are blowing smoke. Then you need to ask yourself, “What is it going to take for me to overcome my animosity, suspicion and hatred of this person who shares with me in the life of Christ but I can hardly stand to talk to them, walk beside them, and I can’t believe they hold any responsibility in the life of this church because I know what kind of people they really are and if anybody else knew what I know about that person they wouldn’t want to have anything to do with them either.” What is it going to take to get you over that so that you can turn to that person and say to them, “Please forgive me for my condemning, judgmental attitude? Allow me to be cleansed by your forgiveness of me as

I will also forgive you and you and I are going to learn how to work this out together for the glory of God. Amen. And perhaps we could do the same with our family members as we learn how to do it in the body of Christ.

Do you notice how James ends the passage? James [4:10], *“Humble yourself before the Lord and He will exalt you.”* We should not underestimate the degree to which it is our pride which it resists and even refuses the emotions which go with repentance: “You’re not going to catch me weeping and wailing and carrying on looking like an idiot, looking like a stupid person. I am not going to demean myself in front of everybody. I am going to maintain my dignity and say, “I’m sorry. God and I have a special relationship.” You are right! Nor should we fool ourselves regarding the connection between acknowledging those emotions and letting them act on us in order to activate the will to undertake the hard work of true repentance, which is to say, being reconciled. This is humility: it is the readiness to abandon the illusion of superiority and look those whom we have wounded and offended in the eyes, confess our sin, ask for forgiveness and offer to walk together in peace, mending the breach and building up the body in love.

Let us pray: Heavenly Father, for the most part we live easy lives, for the most part we don’t know that, impressed with our difficulties. But heavenly Father if we were to look into the lives of those who struggle under horrific burdens of oppression and poverty and illness, oh Father! But for more than the ease of our material circumstances is the ease of our emotional and spiritual discipline. We don’t like to be troubled. Forgive us, for sin is trouble, and that trouble is woven through all of the relationships of our lives, and it is in this church as in any other place. Our hope and our joy is that You are in this church, and so also in our hearts and minds. We know, our Father, that in You we have the victory. Let it not be for us cheap grace, but rather in the recognition of what it cost Jesus, let us also be willing to pay the price to be fully reconciled to You and to one another, to the glory of our Savior. In His name. Amen

Questions for Understanding and Application for “Keeping Good Company”:

1. What do you most admire in Mary the mother of Jesus?
2. What are the negative qualities generally associated with submissiveness? Are there positive qualities you can think of?
3. How should believers think about Satan or the devil?
4. How can we resist the devil?
5. Why is it important for us to remember that we are sinners saved by grace and not just “saints”?
6. How does I John 1:8-9 distinguish between God’s act in our salvation and our application of His salvation to our needs for cleansing from sin and its consequences in us?
7. According to 2 Corinthians 7:8-10, what is the difference between worldly and godly grief?
8. What role does or should emotion play in our faith lives or relationship with God?
9. What part does reconciliation play in repentance and forgiveness?
10. Do you believe Christians need do anything more than believe in Jesus to prepare to meet God?