



The Chronicle

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It's Not How You Start, It's How You Finish

Philip C. Bennett

As Christians, we are on our way to heaven. We thank God for saving grace, for sanctification and for the Holy Ghost - to those who are filled, but we are not sealed as yet. Something can happen to cause us to lose our way.

There is a song by Herbert Buffam, Thoro Harris and W B Olmstead that says:

*Lord I have started to walk in the light,
Shining upon me from heaven so bright.
I bade this world and its follies adieu,
I've started in Jesus and I'm going through.*

*O there are many who start in this race,
But with the Light refused to keep pace;
Others accepted because it was new,
But not very many expect to go through.*

Chorus

*I'm going through, yes I'm going through.
I'll pay the price whatever others do.
I'll take this way with my Lord's despised few.
I've started in Jesus and I'm going through.*

This is a very personal song. The personal pronoun 'I' is used many times.

This journey that we are on is a very personal one to each of us. As we read our Bibles we see many individuals who started out well, but did not finish their race well.

Solomon

Solomon became king of Israel when he was still a young man. King David, his father gave him a solemn charge before he died: *"Now therefore in the sight of all Israel the congregation of the LORD, and in the audience of our God, keep and seek for all the commandments of the LORD your God: that ye may possess this good land, and leave it for an inheritance for your children after you for ever. And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the LORD searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever."*

(1 Chronicles 28:9-10)

Solomon recognised his inadequacy and placed his trust in Almighty God to lead and direct him.

One of his first acts was to go up to the tabernacle at Gibeon to seek the Lord: *"And Solomon went up thither to the brasen altar before the LORD, which was at the tabernacle of the congregation, and offered a thousand burnt offerings upon it. In that night did God appear unto Solomon, and said unto him, Ask what I shall give thee. And Solomon said unto God, Thou hast shewed great mercy unto David my father, and hast made me to reign in his stead. Now, O LORD God, let thy promise unto David my father be established: for thou hast made me king over a people like the dust of the earth in multitude. Give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people: for who can judge this thy people, that is so great?"* (2 Chronicles 1:6-10)

"And God said to Solomon, Because this was in thine heart, and thou hast not asked riches, wealth, or honour, nor the life of thine enemies, neither yet hast asked long life; but hast asked wisdom and knowledge for thyself, that thou mayest judge my people, over whom I have made thee king: Wisdom and knowledge is granted unto thee; and I will give thee riches, and wealth, and honour, such as none of the kings have had that have been before thee, neither shall there any after thee have the like." (2 Chronicles 1:11-12)

God honoured Solomon's prayer and granted his request, along with what he did not even ask for. Today, we talk about Solomon as the wisest man that ever lived. Solomon went on to build and dedicate the temple in Jerusalem to God: *"Now when Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the LORD filled the house. And the priests could not enter into the house of the LORD, because the glory of the LORD had filled the LORD'S house. And when all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of the LORD upon the house, they bowed themselves with their faces to the ground upon the pavement, and*

worshipped, and praised the LORD, saying, For he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever." (2 Chronicles 7:1-3)

God gave him peace and elevated his throne so that all the surrounding nations paid tribute to Israel: *"And king Solomon passed all the kings of the earth in riches and wisdom. And all the kings of the earth sought the presence of Solomon, to hear his wisdom, that God had put in his heart. And they brought every man his present, vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and raiment, harness, and spices, horses, and mules, a rate year by year."* (2 Chronicles 9:22-24)

Solomon's fame spread far and wide; so much so that the Queen of Sheba heard of it in her own country and travelled many miles just to see for herself. When she came and beheld Solomon's kingdom with her own eyes, she left with a wonderful testimony: *"And she said to the king, It was a true report which I heard in mine own land of thine acts, and of thy wisdom: Howbeit I believed not their words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it: and, behold, the one half of the greatness of thy wisdom was not told me: for thou exceedest the fame that I heard."* (2 Chronicles 9:5-6)

You would think that after all that God had done for Solomon, he would remain faithful all his days: *"But king Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites; Of the nations concerning which the LORD said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you: for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: Solomon clave unto these in love. And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart. For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father. Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians,*

and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. And Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and went not fully after the LORD, as did David his father."

(1 Kings 11:1-6)

Solomon forgot the advice that David had given him and all that God had done for him: *"And the LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the LORD God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice, And had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods: but he kept not that which the LORD commanded."*

(1 Kings 11:9-10)

Solomon's transgressions did not just affect him but the generations to come. God rent the kingdom from his son Rehoboam and gave it to another. Solomon started the race well, but did not finish it the same way. We do not know if he ever repented and found his way back to God.

Uzziah

Uzziah became king at the age of sixteen: *"And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father Amaziah did. And he sought God in the days of Zechariah, who had understanding in the visions of God: and as long as he sought the LORD, God made him to prosper."* (2 Chronicles 26:4-5)

Uzziah started out well. He sought God all the days of Zechariah the priest and in doing so, he prospered. Zechariah the priest was like his mentor - who helped to keep him focused on God: *"And he went forth and warred against the Philistines, and brake down the wall of Gath, and the wall of Jabneh, and the wall of Ashdod, and built cities about Ashdod, and among the Philistines. And God helped him against the Philistines, and against the Arabians that dwelt in Gurbaal, and the Mehunims. And the Ammonites gave gifts to Uzziah: and his name spread abroad even to the entering in*

of Egypt; for he strengthened himself exceedingly. And he made in Jerusalem engines, invented by cunning men, to be on the towers and upon the bulwarks, to shoot arrows and great stones withal. And his name spread far abroad; for he was marvellously helped, till he was strong."

(2 Chronicles 26:6-8, 15)

Verses 8 and 15 said that his name spread abroad for he was 'marvellously helped'; in other words, he was supernaturally helped by God: *"But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction: for he transgressed against the LORD his God, and went into the temple of the LORD to burn incense upon the altar of incense."*

(2 Chronicles 26:16)

The burning of incense was the role of the priest, who was consecrated for those duties. Uzziah allowed his fame and the blessings of God to get to his head. When Azariah the High Priest and eighty other priests tried to stop him, he became angry and God struck him down with leprosy. We need to be careful that we do not allow ourselves to be lifted up with pride when God blesses us in any way: *"And Uzziah the king was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a several house, being a leper; for he was cut off from the house of the LORD: and Jotham his son was over the king's house, judging the people of the land."* (2 Chronicles 26:21)

King Uzziah was cut off from the house of God, the presence of God, as well as from the people of God because of his transgression. His son began to reign while he was still alive as he was isolated from the people. In this case, God did not heal him. He was a leper till the day of his death. He was not even buried with the rest of the kings as he was a leper. Uzziah started the race well but did not finish it the same way. The Bible says: *"pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall."* (Proverbs 16:18)

"For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning..." (Romans 15:4)

The Apostle Paul

Let us have a look at someone who did not allow himself to be lifted up in pride: *“For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,”*
(Philippians 3:3-8)

Paul was well educated. He was taught at the feet of Gamaliel - one of the foremost teachers of the day; it was like studying at the Universities of Oxford or Cambridge today: *“It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. Of such an one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities. For though I would desire to glory, I shall not be a fool; for I will say the truth: but now I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me to be, or that he heareth of me.”*
(2 Corinthians 12:1-6)

Paul had many things he could glory in, but to help keep Paul humble after all the revelation he had seen, God gave him a thorn in his flesh. He referred to it as the messenger of satan to buffet him: *“Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not? If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities.”* (2 Corinthians 11:23-30)

Paul had many things he could be bitter about and blame God for. After it was all said and done, Paul had a wonderful and glorious testimony: *“For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.”* (2 Timothy 4:6-8)

Paul started the race well and he finished well. Let us use this great servant of God as our example. 📖

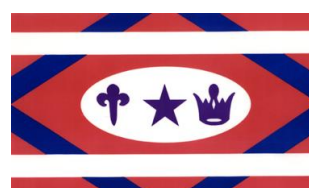


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From the Overseer's Desk

At the time of writing, we are experiencing unprecedented times with the outbreak of the Coronavirus pandemic. Some words from a well-known song are very apt at this time and sums up the situation in large parts of the world succinctly.

*"The market place is empty, no more traffic in the street.
The builder's tools are silent, no more time to harvest wheat.
Busy housewives cease their labour, in the courtroom no debate.
Work on earth has been suspended as the King comes to the gate.
The King is coming, the King is coming... praise God He's coming for me."*

I believe that this is just one more sign pointing us to the imminent return of our Lord and Saviour (St. Matthew 24:7 and St. Luke 21:11). It is amazing how the whole world as we knew it has changed in just a matter of weeks. All of our plans are put on hold as we realise our helplessness before an unseen foe. The words of another popular song by Isaac Watts echoed the helplessness that we felt as we cried out to Almighty God:

*"Our God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast,
And our eternal home.*

*Under the shadow of Thy throne
Still we may dwell secure;
Sufficient is Thine arm alone,
And our defence is sure."*

I pray that we all used our time wisely to enhance our relationship with God. I believe that God has used this pestilence to get man's attention and to draw His children closer to Him:

"Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For, behold, the LORD cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain."

(Isaiah 26:20-21)

Some of God's children may have felt the touch of this deadly virus, but thank God it could only come so far as we stood on the promises of God's unfailing words:

"He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust. Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee. Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked. Because thou hast made the LORD, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation; There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling."

(Psalm 91:1-10)

It seems like such a long time ago since we had a wonderful National Family Camp with a record attendance of 79 delegates. The National Family Camp Co-ordinators Brother Rikki Prince and Brother George Wilson are to be commended for making this event the success it was.

Again we thank God for a wonderful Revival at Handsworth Church where 3 were sanctified and 3 were filled with the Holy Ghost.

We have had to postpone most of our events, but let us be in prayer for these as they are reconvened - along with the other upcoming events.

Upcoming Events:

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|---|---|
| Annual General Meeting | - | Friday 24 th July 2020 |
| District Meeting | - | To be rearranged |
| National Youth Convention | - | To be rearranged |
| National Evangelism Crusade | - | To be rearranged |
| National Bible Quiz | - | To be rearranged |
| National Ladies Retreat | - | To be rearranged |
| Vacation Bible School Concert | - | To be rearranged |
| National Men's Retreat | - | Friday 7 th to Saturday 8 th August 2020 |
| National Convention | - | Friday 4 th to Sunday 6 th September 2020 |



WMB BOOST

Beverley Anderson - National Women's Missionary Band Co-ordinator

The general Women's Missionary Band theme for the assembly year 2019-2020 is:
'Mission Assignment, Operation Deployment'

"And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle?" (St. Matthew 20:6)

Jesus was likening the kingdom of God to a man that is a householder. Early in the morning, this man hired labourers to work in his vineyard. As the Bible states, he agreed a wage that they would be paid.

He did not stop there. At noon, the householder went to his vineyard and at 3pm he sought more labourers to work for him. Here in verse six, we see him out again at 5pm and saw others standing idle, because no one had hired them. He hired them and sent them to his vineyard to work. Their pay was also discussed.

We know that metaphorically, Christ was talking about the spiritual work that had to be done after His departure. Not long after this, He would be making His triumphant entry into Jerusalem. Jesus's time of departure was nearing, so He was setting out what needed to be done.

To work for Christ means to be divinely designated (chosen/elected/selected).

Acts 13:2: "As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them."

I am sure that no one whom the Holy Ghost has separated for the work is unaware that they have been chosen to work in God's vineyard. Workers in God's vineyard also know they must be separated from the world themselves to do God's work.

The work calls for fasting and prayer. When we fast and pray, we will not be found standing idle.



To work for Christ means that we have to do His will, have the same mind set as Him and the same determination. That is why Jesus told His disciples in St. John 4:34 that His “... *meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.*”

The determination Christ had for the work is similar to the feeling we have for food when we are hungry. We need to have a hunger and a thirst for God’s work - if we do not, then we will become idle.

The Bible tells us in St. John 6:44, that “*No man can come to me (Christ), except the Father which hath sent me draw him:*”

The Bible however, does not tell me that Christ sat around idle and men were drawn to Him. He went out and about and was busy working, as the many examples in St. Matthew Chapters 19 to 23 shows:

“*...when Jesus had finished these sayings, he departed from Galilee, and came into the coasts of Judaea beyond Jordan;*” (St. Matthew 19:1)

“*And great multitudes followed him;*” (St. Matthew 19:2)

- In this area, Jesus made it clear why a man should not put away his wife.
- He made His disciples and the multitude around know that children too may come to Him for salvation.
- It was on this journey that Jesus made clear to the disciples how hard it was for the rich to enter the kingdom of God.
- Many were healed on this journey.

From here, He headed for Jericho, and Jerusalem. “*And as they departed from Jericho, a great multitude followed him.*” (St. Matthew 20:29)

- Here, Jesus healed two blind men.

And as he “*...drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the mount of Olives,*” He sent two of his disciples to make preparations. (St. Matthew 21:1)

- In Jerusalem, many messages were given and lessons taught to those of the religious orders and the people around.

In each of the accounts, Jesus was out doing the will of His Father who had sent Him.

We cannot be idle, as souls are dying everyday without God. How can I be at ease when they are dying spiritually?

Let not the question be asked of us, “**Why stand ye here all the day idle?**”

National Family Camp Report 2020



Greetings to all, in the wonderful name of Jesus - our soon coming King!!

It was yet again another wonderful week, with another record attendance for National Family Camp 2020.

The Scriptures that influenced our Camp theme are so relevant to

the times we are living in. We never imagined a global pandemic would strike the world in the way it did, at that very same time. There can be no denying that something "different" is happening in the world and we were blessed to have the time to spend in fellowship, prayer and learning.

I believe God is asking us to take a look and examine His Word and reflect on what is happening right now. He has warned us of these times and that His return is very soon:

"Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh."

(St. Matthew 25:13)

We must keep our spiritual eyes open and our senses tuned, so we are constantly readying ourselves for Christ's return. We make ourselves ready by allowing for more of Him in our lives spiritually and crucifying self:

"He must increase, but I must decrease." (St. John 3:30)

"Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?"

(1 Corinthians 5:6)

We were blessed with wonderful messages and workshops that were presented by our Camp workers. The pictures remind us of the wonderful time we had.



There were challenging workshops that helped us build upon our knowledge of the end times; and importantly what mind-set it will take to be ready for Christ's return.



The participation from ALL who attended made this once again a very special week. The drama evening was one of the highlights of our event filled week.



Keep an eye out on the Camp WhatsApp group for some videos of what happened this year.

God willing, we can be back in 2021. We have provisional dates for the February half term in 2021. We have not been able to plan any fund raising initiatives this year, due to the impact of COVID-19 and the uncertainty it will bring over the coming months. We will keep you updated as we gather more information on pricing and availability at the centre. We are asking for your prayers that our Lord makes a way for us all to be there next year, if it is His will.

God bless from your National Family Camp Co-ordinators
Brother Rikki Prince and Brother George Wilson

Diary dates and announcements:

National Men's Retreat 2020 – Friday 7th and Saturday 8th August 2020

This year, due to current events with the global pandemic, our usual retreat will change. We will not be going away for National Men's Retreat. Activities on **Friday 7th August 2020** will be at a local park for sports and games.

Venue is to be confirmed.

Time: 5:30 pm.

Saturday 8th August 2020

Venue: Long Lane Church

Time: 10:00 am.



District Meeting – 3rd June 2020

Long Lane Church hosted England's first District Meeting of the year via Skype, due to the Coronavirus pandemic. Pastor Philip Bennett led the devotion and the pastors from the local churches, Druids Heath - Pastor Angela Clarke, Handsworth - Pastor Beverley Anderson and London - Pastor George Wilson encouraged the congregation with the Scriptures. Sister Keshia Toolsee of Long Lane Church then ministered in song with 'Corner Stone'.

The evening's speaker was Evangelist Claudine Brown from Long Lane Church. Her message was based on St. Luke 17:3-6, 7-10: **The Sin of Unforgiveness**. We saw an image of a sycamine tree and learnt of its characteristics. Main points were a sycamine tree grows quickly, is difficult to kill due to its complex root system which penetrates hundreds of feet down into the earth. It grows bitter fruit and its wood is used to make caskets in the Middle East.

An excerpt from Sister Claudine message: *'Faith is usually talked about when we are seeking healing of the body, so why can't it be used to heal our minds? Jesus used the example of the sycamine tree because there are some hurts, offences and sources of bitterness that have an intricate root system which reach deep, deep down into our being. Sometimes, the roots of that hurt are so complicated that when you try to explain it you don't even know where to begin, so you just say "Lord, have mercy." The roots are so entangled and deep down within you that you don't know how to express the feeling you have. With a sycamine tree, if you cut it to its base it will not die, but spring back up. It is the same with us when we are trespassed against. We try to cut the tree to the base, trying to push the pain to the back of our heads. We try to get on with things, pretend it doesn't exist, but somehow we find that tree quickly springs back up again, probably even quicker than before. This is because like the sycamine, it is difficult to kill. When we try to work out forgiveness with human strength and effort we end up meditating on the hurt even more, sending the roots down even deeper. We as Christians are called to be forgiving people, merciful people. Why? Because when we want forgiveness, we go to God for it and expect it.'*

The fruit of the sycamine tree is very bitter and can't be eaten all at once. Fruit is the evidence of what kind of tree is growing. A bitter person cannot hide their bitterness because their fruit is on show and bitterness will spoil our hearts. It ruins relationships with others, even those that did not cause the bitterness in the first place. For example, some people have been abused or neglected at some point during their childhood. They grow up having difficulty forming relationships and trusting others, building walls. So it is with us. We build up walls that no one is allowed through because we want that bitterness to remain. All roots of the sycamine tree must be plucked up because Christ is returning soon and we have great work to do. A bitter minister will not have any effect on a person who needs Jesus Christ. It is possible, it only takes that mustard seed faith and love in Jesus Christ to be able to pluck up the tree by the roots and plant it in the sea. The wood from the sycamine tree was used to make caskets. Leaving the tree alive leads to our spiritual death - the roots need to be plucked up.

*The consequences of not forgiving, St. Matthew 6:15, if you don't forgive then you won't be forgiven. There are a few examples of forgiveness in the Bible - in St. Luke 23:34, Jesus forgave whilst on the cross. Stephen (Acts 7:60), whilst being stoned to death forgave his executioners. Stephen was full of **faith** and power (Holy Ghost). It was his faith that gave him the ability to forgive the elders, the scribes and the multitude of liars surrounding him. Offences come in all different sizes, big or small we must forgive them all. It must be our way of life. Forgiveness strengthens you! St. Matthew 18:21-35; St. Matthew 23:23-24; Psalm 103:3,12; Proverbs 17:9.'*

Sister Beverley Wilson - National Reporter

Special Note:

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