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Paul's Reliance Upon The Spirit

JUNE 29TH 2011 BY STAFF WRITER

Paul's Reliance Upon The Spirit

Reprint Compliments of Men At The Cross By Joe White

1 Corinthians 2: 4-5

"4And my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God."

VIDEO OF THE DAY

Twice this year I had dinner in the home of an ex-NFL linebacker. Both were godly men with godly wives who treated me with such hospitality that you would have thought I was an ambassador. Their children were conversational. Their homes were in order. Even their pets were polite. In the eye of a guest, they seemed to live "the perfect life".

Now of course I know things could not have been perfect for them all the time. But their households did appear to have a lasting peace about them-peace that came not through knowing they had both earned a Super Bowl ring, but through a relationship with an awesome God. In both of their cases, I noticed that their trophies were nowhere in sight. It wasn't until I pressed them that they led me to the basement or to an obscure closet; there they showed me the evidence of their careers collecting dust. In one corner, here was a Super Bowl game

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jersey, long forgotten by the public. Underneath that stack of boxes was a box containing the pair of shoes Darryl Green wore to run a 4.3/40. The shoes mean little to anybody. One day even Darryl Green, the fastest man in the NFL, will fade from people's memory. Somehow, my two linebacker friends had kept it all in proper perspective. Instead of spending our evening together talking about their accomplishments, we spent our time talking about the Lord.

Perhaps these two men had read 1 Corinthians 2, where Paul contrasts the power of God and the wisdom of men. To the church at Corinth, Paul said, "Rely on God's Spirit! All else is foolishness."

QUESTIONS:

1. If you achieved Super Bowl status, or some equivalent honor, where would you display your trophies?
2. Recall a time when something (or someone) you relied upon let you down. Is it possible you were relying upon that thing in place of God?
3. Discuss a time when you experienced the power of God.

LIFELINE:

Take inventory of the things you rely upon. If they are anything less than God's spirit ... reconsider.

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The Wisdom of God: 1 Corinthians 1:18-31

JUNE 28TH 2011 BY STAFF WRITER

The Wisdom of God: 1 Corinthians 1:18-31

Reprint Compliments of Men At The Cross

VIDEO OF THE DAY

Whatever one thinks of the man, Muhammad Ali, the fighter (Ali) was an unsurpassed warrior. But to see him now, a trembling victim of Parkinson Disease, one can hardly imagine him floating like a butterfly and stinging like a bee. Nevertheless, we saw him put on a show in the ring, and what we saw astounded us.

Most memorable of all were his bouts with Smokin' Joe Frazier. Joe was a half foot shorter than Ali, built like a block of granite, and familiar with only one style of boxing ... hard and straightforward. He was known to pursue his opponents relentlessly, moving in tight, taking blow after blow, until he finally wore them down enough to move in for the kill.

"In spite of Ali's flash and firepower, Joe Frazier's just the man to beat the Champ," said many sports analysts. "Ali's a magician, but the world will see what he's truly made of when he runs out of steam against Smokin' Joe."

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Those who were closest to Ali tell us that for weeks prior to the match, he did nothing but abdominal work-sit-ups after sit-ups-even at the neglect of his other skills. It was baffling to the media, but Ali seemed to have everything under control.

"If you're coming to see me float like a butterfly and sting like a bee, you're in for a surprise! I'm going to use the rope-a-dope on Mr. Frazier, and he'll never know what hit him."

The rope-a-dope? No one had ever heard of it. Whatever it was, it seemed like foolishness to those who thought Ali's best chance of defeating such an unorthodox opponent was to fight like he had always fought-fast and flashy.

When the fight began, Ali headed for the ropes, and Frazier followed. Round after round, Smokin' Joe pummeled Ali's mid-section, with barely a retaliation from Ali. Meanwhile, Ali kept up his confident banter with the crowd, and soon it became evident to all that Frazier was the "dope" Ali had been talking about. By the late rounds, Ali's abdominal work began to pay off. Worn out by his unsuccessful attack on Ali's torso, Frazier found little strength left in his arms. That's when Ali turned the tables, and within a round the victory was his. For weeks afterwards, the media praised Ali's rope-a-dope tactics. What had once been considered foolish was now the epitome of boxing wisdom.

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Perhaps more than anyone, Paul knew how treacherous an opponent the wisdom of man was to the gospel.

Human wisdom or pride has always been a proud brawler. It will punch and kick and bite and gouge, and do whatever it takes to stay on top. Its pride's core is the belief that man is good enough or clever enough to get to heaven. To the prideful person, the thought of Christ dying on the cross to make it possible for people to live in heaven is foolishness. Consequently, pride is opposed to the cross, and would do nothing more than to pummel it to the canvas.

To the church of Corinth Paul said, For the word of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

In the end, when the worldly-wise thinks God is on the ropes, it will be the power of the cross that is the victor over Satan.

QUESTIONS:

1. Name a time when you felt foolish for following Christ.
2. What does verse 18 mean when it calls the cross, "the power of God"?
3. Name a time when your human wisdom (or pride) hindered you from following Christ.

LIFELINE:

Spiritual fitness is the tool to use when fighting against the Christian's greatest opponent, Satan. Being spiritually fit will allow blow-by-blow to come at you and still gain you victory over Satan. Name ways you can be more spiritually fit as an individual and as a family.

1 Corinthians 1:18-31

18For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. 19For it is written, "I WILL DESTROY THE WISDOM OF THE WISE, AND THE CLEVERNESS OF THE CLEVER I WILL SET ASIDE." 20Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? 21For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. 22For indeed Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom; 23but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness, 24but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 5Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. 26For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; 27but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, 28and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are, 29so that no man may boast before God. 30But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, 31so that, just as it is written, "LET HIM WHO BOASTS, BOAST IN THE LORD."

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Joplin Stained Glass Theater To Return

JUNE 25TH 2011 BY NEWS

Joplin Stained Glass Theater To Return

Special to the ShowMe Times
From Baptist Press

JOPLIN, Mo. (BP)--The cast and crew of the musical "I Remember Mama" had just finished their final performance when the killer EF-5 tornado ripped through Joplin, Mo.

Two people were killed and others sustained serious injuries when the May 22 tornado destroyed the theater and much of the Missouri community.

But in the wake of the tragedy, theater personnel said they felt a call from God to continue sharing the Gospel and strengthening believers through plays and musicals.

Though each Stained Glass Theatre is autonomous, there is a network of related theaters throughout Missouri started by a professor at Southwest Baptist University in Bolivar.

Tammy Aggus, director of the Joplin theater's next scheduled production, was helping strike down the set when the tornado hit. She told Baptist Press the experience was "just chaos."

"One of the guys ... came running from the front doors of the theater yelling at us that we were still in the theater that we 'need to get downstairs now,'" Aggus recounted. "But the

staircase is really narrow, and I ended up between the stage and the first row of seats just on the floor there.

"We dropped where we were because the front doors were blowing real hard. The windows started breaking out in the theater. It was just chaos. So I hit the floor, covered my head and prayed."

After approximately 20 seconds, the tornado subsided and Aggus surveyed the damage. Though she had only cuts and scrapes and a sore back, she saw a friend near her having trouble breathing and began trying to help others. One of her main goals was to calm the teenagers and children in the basement who had been in the cast.

"We got out of the building as quickly as we could because it was never a real sturdy building to start with," she said. "So we weren't sure how well it was going to hold together after being damaged like that."

The two dead were Sally Moulton, a cast member, and Randy Mell, a longtime theater patron and season ticket holder, Aggus said.

"When you do a show, you're with these people almost constantly ... for six weeks, and you always get really close," she said. "And now it's just even more. I was really glad I could be there for the kids because I'm really close to a lot of them. Most of them were there without their parents."

As a board member of the theater, Aggus said she anticipates conversations in the future about whether to rebuild.

Steven Jenkins, administrative director of the Stained Glass Theatre in Ozark, Mo., who has been involved with the Joplin theater in the past, recapped the extent of the damage.

"The entire top floor is gone. It's wiped clean. The floor of the top floor is in the basement. So getting the children out was fairly difficult," Jenkins told BP. "And of the four basement walls, I understand that at least one is still standing. That's about it."

Because rent for the 200-seat building was only \$600 per month, Jenkins said finding another suitable building at an affordable price will be difficult. None of the building's contents were insured.

"My personal belief -- and I believe it's the general feeling of everyone involved with

Stained Glass -- is that we're God-driven and God-ordained," Jenkins said. "God meant for us to have a theater in Joplin. I don't feel anything that tells me that that's no longer the case. So I believe they will continue."

As part of the theater's commitment to Christian values, all actors commit to church attendance and sign a pledge not to do anything in public that will tarnish the organization's reputation. Typically, shows begin or end with prayer, and productions aim at helping people grow as Christians, Jenkins said.

"When you're doing God's will, our enemy doesn't like it," he said. "And attacks of the enemy have been continuous since the beginning of that ministry. And like Christ's crucifixion, I think the enemy thinks he's finally won. But I don't believe God works that way. I believe victory will come out of this tragedy because we can't let the enemy win."

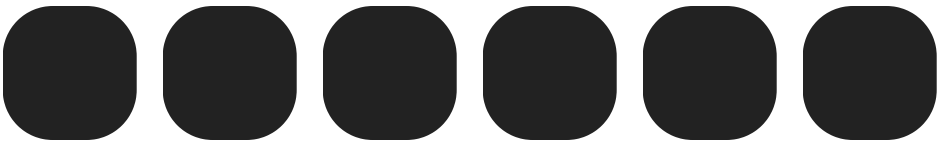
Aggus requested prayer for the Stained Glass Theatre family "as they recover physically and emotionally."

Photo Above: Stained Glass Theatre in Joplin, Mo, destroyed in the May 22 tornado, had shared the Gospel and strengthened local believers through plays and musicals. Cast member Sally Moulton and longtime patron Randy Mell were killed in the building.

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Men At The Cross Events Scheduled

JUNE 23RD 2011 BY STAFF WRITER

Men At The Cross Events Scheduled

Reprint of Email from Joe White

During a very difficult week recently, God encouraged me with some refreshing thoughts that I couldn't wait to share with you!

The tsunami destroys the coastland of Thailand; an 8.6 earthquake ravages the heart of Japan; the Mississippi river swarms out of its banks; a tornado demolishes three small towns in northeastern Oklahoma; a forest fire takes out seventy thousand acres in southwestern Colorado.....your mom finds a lump in her breast; your dad hears the doctor proclaim that he indeed has prostate cancer; your wife's first baby is a miscarriage.

Your heart cries out, "God? Where are you God? Is anyone listening? Are you there? Are you out there somewhere?"

Perhaps you wonder as I have wondered, "Is this a test of my faith or an act of Satan to attempt to destroy my faith?"

"Is this going to make me bitter or better?"

"Is this going to defeat me or make me stronger?"

"Is this going to cause me to retreat or fill my heart with ever deepening resolve to serve God more diligently?"

[images/Blog Images/show/uj34](#)

One of my true heroes is Dr. Howard Hendricks, longtime Dallas Cowboys chaplain and one of the finest seminary professors, speakers, writers and exhorters who ever lived. When his wife Jeanne was just about to go under anesthesia for invasive skull surgery he took her by the hand and proclaimed, "either God is sovereign or He is not. And, if He's not, we're in deep trouble. But I'm coming down on the side that He is."

Either God created the cosmos or it was a blind chance accident.

Either God formed you in your mother's womb or you are just one random step up the evolutionary ladder from the ape family.

Either God has a plan for your life or He is an absentee dad.

Either Mary was a virgin or she wasn't.

Either Jesus died on the cross to save us from all our sins or He didn't.

Either believing Christ by faith and surrendering our lives to follow in His steps leads us on an absolutely certain road to Heaven or it doesn't.

As a battled and bruised old granddad, having been on <images/Blog Images/show/uj30> the battlefield for 62 years myself, I stand on the side of my mentor Howard Hendricks. In the middle of the toughest, most grueling season of my life recently, when it felt like the 8.6 earthquake had hit my house, a dear friend took me on a refreshing scriptural journey to Genesis 50:20 where a victorious and empowered Joseph responded to his brothers who had beaten him and left to die in a pit. Now they crawled in fear to kneel at his feet to beg him for mercy and crumbs off his table. Joseph proclaimed with humble charity, "what they intended for evil, God meant for good that many lives would be saved."

Three days after I was reminded of that reflection of God's sovereignty. 3400 men showed up for an event where I in my brokenness was blessed to be able to build and proclaim the cross of Jesus. Somewhere between 2000 and 2500 men and many of their sons rushed to the cross to surrender their lives to follow Jesus as "the Genesis 50:20 principle" echoed in my ears, "....that many lives would be saved."

A dear kamp family friend of mine lost two of their three precious daughters in a tragic Am Track derailment....

<images/Blog Images/show/uj32>

A close family friend discovered a lump in her breast this week....

Another dear saint sits by her husband's bedside day and night comforting him throughout his final stages of cancer....

A father of three small children just lost his wife to an untimely encounter with cancer....

I stand in awe of the faith and the humble response of these dear people! They, like Dr. Hendricks, all "came down on the side that **GOD IS.**" For me, I have been greatly comforted and lifted up by Hezekiah's word to his fearful army as they faced total annihilation by King Sennacherib and his massive Assyrian army in II Chronicles 32:7 & 8, "Be strong and courageous, do not fear or be dismayed because of the king of Assyria nor because of all the horde that is with him; for the one with us is greater than the one

with him. With him is only an arm of flesh, but with us is the LORD our God to help us and to fight our battles. And the people relied on the words of Hezekiah king of Judah." David was well acquainted with pressure, personal failure, tragedy, and deep resolve. Psalm 103:19 speaks peaceful resolution to my heart today, "The Lord has established His throne in the heavens, and **His sovereignty rules over all.**" Isaiah echoes with stereophonic comfort, "He will swallow up death for all time, and the Lord God will wipe tears away from all faces, and He will remove the reproach of His people from all the earth; for the Lord has spoken." Isaiah 25:8.

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If you or I embrace the premise that indeed God is sovereign, several other very comforting and emotionally stabilizing factors follow like a string of loaded box cars connected securely to a powerful train engine pulling them faithfully and resolutely down the steel tracks of eternity through our tearful days and long sleepless nights.

I Corinthians 10:13 is **boxcar #1**. Even though God does not author or desire "bad things to happen to good people", He acts as a filter and will not allow the "world, the flesh and the devil" to give us more challenges than we can take. "No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who 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."

Boxcar #2 is often overlooked and trivialized because of our calloused familiarity with it. For your own peace and security never unhitch this boxcar of assurance from the train. "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose."

Romans 8:28

I've seen the truth of **boxcar #3** played out in magnificent ways in my life and those that I have counseled over the decades. "Who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God." (II Corinthians 1:4.) The beauty of God's creative hand in this securing principle is that God not only will comfort ("speak bravery") into my life in our hardships but in doing so He'll also use that hardship to equip you and me so that we can give empathy, warmth and wisdom to others who experience similar hardships in our future relationships. It takes a mom who has lost a child to understand another mom who has lost a child. It takes a cancer survivor to be able to come alongside a friend who's just been diagnosed with the same life threatening disease.

My many tragedies have become my trophies.

My many catastrophes have become my care packages to others.

My many afflictions have become my affirmation to those to whom I am blessed to comfort in theirs.

The boxcars are countless that follow the magnificent lead engine of God's sovereignty and the great train of promises and truths that follow.

Alas, the caboose at the end of the train fills your heart with hope in sufficient amounts to empower the believer to stand firm through any trial that awaits you at a future station down the railway. "For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord," (Romans 8:38 & 39.)

A welcoming echo from Heaven's hall of fame sings to my heart today. After losing his family, his possessions, his friends and his health, the old warrior Job proclaims, "Oh that my words were written! Oh that they were inscribed in a book! That with an iron stylus and lead they were engraved in the rock forever! As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last He will take His stand on the earth. Even after my skin is destroyed, yet from my flesh I shall see God; whom I myself shall behold, and whom my eyes will see and not another. My heart faints within me!"

Again, the "old master from Dallas" has given wisdom in abundance to my beleaguered and weary soul.

"I choose to come down on the side that **GOD IS.** "

[images/Blog Images/show/uj2v](#)

P.S. See how through this one man's testimony God used to bring him closer and reveal His true identity!

"I know that I haven't responded to the mass emails but I have received them and applied the necessary principles to me and my family's lives. So much positive has happened to us since the Men At The Cross meeting and just as many obstacles have tried weaken our faith. You guys gave my life hope to see all those men and young boys cry out to GOD. It showed me that anything that I thought was too much to bare I should not only put it in

the Lord's hands but think about all the other less fortunate people in the world and not be so selfish. My wife was car jacked one week after the conference with our three daughters in the vehicle. No one was hurt but that showed me that GOD has tremendous mercy and grace over our lives. The car was found the next day and all 4 teenage suspects apprehended. I was furious! At that moment the Lord reassured me that prayers do get answered. So instead of seeking revenge, I received an opportunity to coach and mentor a inner city youth basketball team and teach them positive reinforcement and hopefully prevent this type of thing from happening again. Wow GOD has a way of bringing us closer and revealing his true identity! You are a true man of GOD. Don't ever change and keep on encouraging people all over the world. Hope to see you again!"

P.P.S. Hollis Jones & his new book "The Entrusted Leader" are superb! I've gone through his syllabus and it is a great, great resource for ALL men's leaders! Check it out at: www.entrustedleader.com

A Great Friend - Great Speaker/Writer named Mike Silva just came out with a new book! Anything Mike does is sincere, wise, and straight to the heart! I highly recommend "#1 Man" Check it out at <https://mikesilva.org/donor.php>!

P.P.P.S.

Here are the confirmed 2011 conferences:

July 16: St. Louis MO
September 10: Lincoln, NE
September 17: Alexandria, LA
September 23: Rochester, MN
September 24: Aurora/Chicago, IL
October 7: Cape Girardeau, MO
October 8: Tampa, FL
October 15: Branson, MO
October 22: Kansas City, MO
October 29: Central, PA
January 28: Alton, IL

If you know a man in any of these cities who'll be great to join the team, email me at Joe@kanakuk.com

More events are coming soon! Check our website for more updates (www.menatthecross.org). If your city isn't listed and you want to put together a

conference there, contact Marc Harris at marc@menatthecross.org

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Putting The Squeeze On Childhood Cancer

JUNE 10TH 2011 BY NEWS

Putting The Squeeze On Childhood Cancer

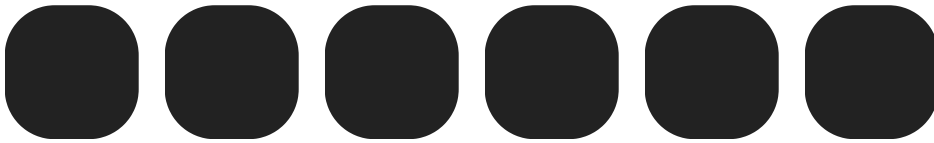
For these youngsters, the lemonade and sweet treats they were selling Friday afternoon were "special." Out on a hot Friday afternoon were (from left) Maddie, John Paul, Sarah, Cole, Seth, and Alex - just some of the youngsters at Small Wonders Daycare who sold lemonade to raise funds for Alex's Lemonade Stand foundation. Alex's Lemonade Stand fights childhood cancer one cup of lemonade at a time. The kids had their stand near the Walnut Street entrance of First Baptist Church, and they will be there every Friday afternoon until the end of July. The children say their goal is to raise \$1000 to donate to the Alex's Lemonade Stand foundation. The foundation is named for young Alexandra "Alex" Scott of Manchester, Conn. Shortly before her first

birthday, Alex was diagnosed with neuroblastoma, a type of childhood cancer. On her first birthday, the doctors. She started a lemonade stand to raise funds for other children with cancer. (SMT photo by Annabeth Miller)

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