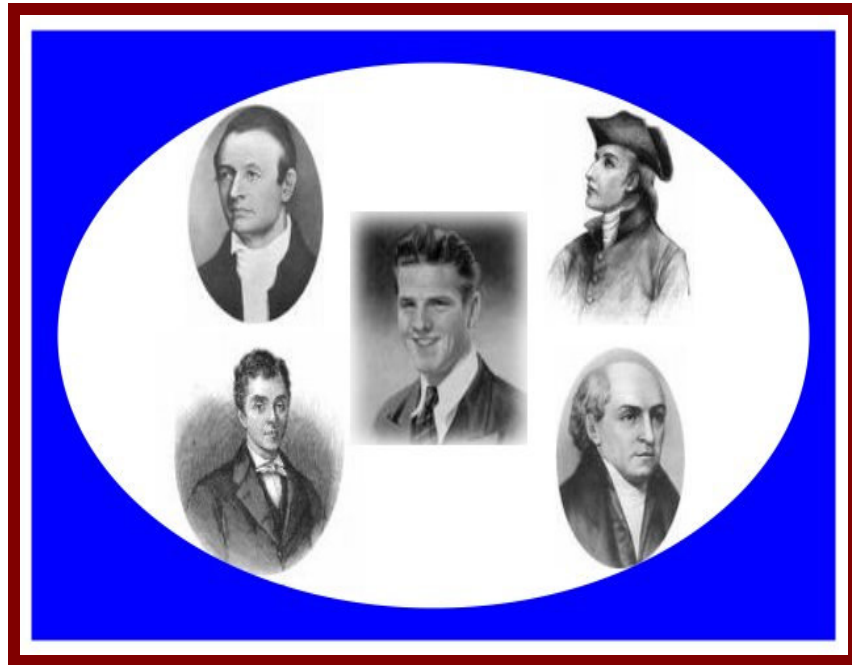


# Bread & Wine



**SEPTEMBER 2007**

## BREAD & WINE

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**Cover Picture:** Beginning in the top left corner and going clockwise, the following great missionaries are pictured: Adoniram Judson, David Brainerd, William Carey, Henry Martyn and in the center, Jim Elliot

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## **Important Notice:**

Commencing in January 2008, Bread & Wine will only be available as an online magazine on the Bethel Community Church website. Printed copies will only be available to those who request this particular format. All Bread & Wine issues are currently available online.

## **Editorial**

*Russ Atmore*

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At the heart of all the troubles in the Church today lies the lack of solid experimental preaching. This kind of preaching is expositional but it is Christ rooted and centered. Our Seminaries and Bible Colleges are concerned to produce men who can preach. This is a good desire, but the truth of the matter is that no seminary can ever make a preacher. As Martyn Lloyd-Jones said, preachers are born, not made. This does not mean that the subject of homiletics should not be taught – it must. Homiletics merely sharpens and aids the preacher given by the Lord.

Why is the pulpit so weak today? The answer is because men are not preachers. The pulpit is a humbling experience, but also a holy experience. This is what made the Reformers and Puritans such great preachers. They came into the pulpit straight from meeting with God. There are not many preachers that I would recommend to Christians today. There are two examples in this issue of men who are excellent preachers.

These are Sinclair Ferguson and Joel Beeke. It is the Puritan experimental aspect of their preaching that makes them worth listening to.

The Church is at war about worship because the Church does not understand worship. A good business understands that the customer is the most important part of that business. In the Church we have made people the customer, so we have become concerned how we look and appear to people. In this equation, God is left out. This is the Seeker-Sensitive and Emergent Church fallacy. It is concerned with man. We make our church services appealing to man and not to God. The only important person in the church service is God. If any person comes into our services and leaves saying the people were nice and the service was nice, then I fear greatly that we have not truly worshipped (see 1 Cor. 14:23 – 25). The only person that matters is God. Did we worship Him? Was He pleased? Anything else is a distant second place.

Doing the will of God is important to Christians because if we are not doing God's will, we know something is wrong. The Lord Jesus makes this point in Mark 3.

Our cover picture reveals 5 great missionaries, Adoniram Judson, David Brainerd, William Carey (the father of missions), Henry Martyn and from the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Jim Elliot. Their Church denominations were different, but they all had a passion for the lost. Three of them died under the age of 31 which proves that great things for God can be accomplished by those who completely rely upon Him. As William Carey said, "Expect great things from God; Attempt great things for God." Kaitlin Atmore makes this point in her article – "We shall not be shaken"

Our Bible Quiz makes you look for some missionaries and Christian workers. Some you may know and others not, but see if you can find them.

Please be aware that Bread & Wine will only be available in the New Year (2008) on the Bethel Community Church Website. All previous issues are currently available online. In view of this, all subscriptions for 2008 will not be necessary, so you do not have to renew. We will offer the magazine in a revised format on paper for those who may desire it this way, but please let the editors know your preference.

*Soli Deo Gloria*

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*"He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose."*

*Jim Elliot*

## **Little Innocents?**

*Sinclair Ferguson*

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*"The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies." Psalms 58:3*

Last thing at night, when our children were small, I often secretly watched them as they slept: there they lay, breathing rhythmically, almost imperceptibly, relaxed, at ease, enjoying "the sleep of innocence." But man - perhaps especially a father - looks on the outward appearance (1 Sam. 16:7). What of the heart on which God gazes?

Wearing biblical lenses we come to see a more sinister reality: our children may be unknowing and naive, but innocent they have never been. Like ourselves they are guilty and depraved. Already, as Robert Murray McCheyne once wrote, the seed of every known sin is planted in their hearts.

The truth is not merely that if things work out badly our children may drift spiritually and morally; rather, the drive to do so is already embedded in their hearts. All that is required for the tragic harvest is that they allow themselves to give expression to their heart's desires. For in the sense in which Reformed theology has used the term, our children are already totally depraved; that is, as Louis Berkhof expressed it: "(1) . . . inherent corruption extends to every part of . . . nature, to all the faculties and powers of both soul and body; and (2) that there is no spiritual good . . . in the sinner at all, but only perversion" (Systematic Theology, p. 247).

The total depravity of our children is a faith-doctrine, a biblical insight. Our natural instinct is to think of newborn children as moral and spiritual *tabulae rasae*, clean sheets on which to write a successful life. Admittedly the page may soon be a little blotted (the occasional temper tantrum!), but the background is still basically white, surely?

Not so, according to the Scriptures: the wicked go astray from the womb and speak lies from birth, insists the psalmist (Ps. 58:3). Even if we see these words as describing only some ("the wicked" are a specific category in the Psalms), we would be foolish to minimize what David is saying: the fruit is already in the root. We commit sin because our basic nature is twisted.

This is as true of a David as it is of "the wicked." That was the revelation which stunned him when Nathan exposed him after his adultery with Bathsheba and the murder of Uriah (2 Sam. 11-12; cf. Ps. 51:5).

This is not a self-justifying excuse; it is a confession of sin. David's sin was not an aberration in an otherwise satisfactory life, but a revelation of congenital heart-disease.

How can this be? In Romans 5:12-21, Paul explains it in terms of the unity of the human race in Adam. Sin entered the world through him, and death followed. All sinned in Adam the representative head of the whole of humanity.

The proof of this is seen in the way death spread to all and reigned over them. Paul adds: "even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam" (Rom. 5:14), i.e., those who had not been recipients of the special verbal revelation of God's will.

Paul may not be thinking here exclusively of infants; but no class of persons more clearly illustrates this terrible consequence of the fall than do infants who die before they are even capable of understanding God's command.

Why does this happen? Death does not come, ultimately, from "natural causes," but because our representative Adam has catastrophically brought us down in his fall. This is what our forefathers wisely taught their children: "In Adam's fall we sinned all." By his disobedience we have all been constituted sinners (Rom. 5:19). As a result of our natural relationship with him we have come to share in his depravity from the very beginning of our existence. We are flawed from conception. None of us has a "normal" birth.

Nor is it long before this manifests itself in a thousand ways: are all tantrums expressions of physical discomfort? Are we not shocked to see the willfulness of children? Or do we fail to ascribe to God every evidence we see of a gracious character forming? (Do we know our hearts so little that we think it is thanks to ourselves?)

In a world drifting on a sea of parental moral and spiritual confusion, the doctrine of the total depravity of our children is actually an important practical anchor. Parents who understand its significance recognize the divine wisdom in teaching the commandments of God, given as they are largely in negative form. God wrote them for sinners. They also recognize the importance of teaching God's law in the context of God's grace in Christ and through the Spirit. With Augustine we know that God will give what He commands.

God has not given us angels, but sinners to train to be saints. Since the situation is further complicated by the fact that parents are also sinners, we constantly need to rely on the teaching and directives of Scripture. While that is a subject all on its own, here are some simple guidelines.

Recognize that your children are miniature versions of yourself. Learn to think in terms of Adam and Christ, sin and grace. That itself will help you realize why God has given you the command not to exasperate your children (Eph. 4:4).

In bringing up your children, do not commit child-idolatry (in which the one commandment is "never say no") or self-idolatry ("he/she will reflect my glory"). Rather, by God's promised grace, parent a sinner into sainthood.

Take seriously the promise of God's Word that He will be your God and the God of your children. But if you believe in infant baptism, do not make the mistake of presuming that covenant children do not need to repent and believe the Gospel. For in baptism we recognize the need of the washing of regeneration and place our children under a life-long covenant responsibility to repent of sin and to believe in Christ.

In times when there is grievous sin, never forget that there is more grace in Christ than there is sin in your heart and your child's heart combined. In Christ there is a way back from the far country of a life style even for children who have given full expression to heart depravity. So Monica discovered after years of praying for her son, Augustine.

After all, *"And such were some of you"* (1 Cor. 6:11) and did you not find grace in Christ?

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*“What a mercy was it to have parents that prayed for us before they had us, as well as in our infancy when we could not pray for ourselves.”*

*John Flavel*

## **What is Reformed Experimental Preaching?**

*Joel Beeke*

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*“And Shaphan the scribe shewed the king, saying, Hilkiyah the priest hath delivered me a book. And Shaphan read it before the king. And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the book of the law, that he rent his clothes.”* 2 Kings 22:10-11

*“So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.”* Nehemiah 8:8

You probably know that, historically, Reformed and Puritan preaching was 'experimental' preaching. But do you understand what is meant by the term experimental or experiential? The term comes from the Latin word 'experimentum', derived from a verb which means to 'try, test, prove, or put to the test'. The same verb can also mean 'to find or know by experience', and so gives rise to the word 'experientia', meaning 'trial, experiment' and 'the knowledge gained by experiment'.

### **Christian Experience**

Calvin used experiential (*experientia*) and experimental (*experimentum*) interchangeably, since, from the perspective of biblical preaching, both words indicate the need for examining or testing experienced knowledge by the touchstone of Scripture (Isaiah 8:20). Experimental preaching stresses the need to know by experience the truths of the Word of God. It seeks to explain in terms of biblical truth, how matters ought to go, and how they do go, in the Christian life. It aims to apply divine truth to the whole range of the believer's experience: in his walk with God as well as his relationship with family, the church, and the world around him. We can learn much from the Puritans about this type of preaching.

As Paul Helm writes: 'The situation calls for preaching that will cover the full range of Christian experience, and a developed experimental theology. The preaching must give guidance and instruction to Christians in terms of their actual experience. It must not deal in unrealities or treat congregations as if they lived in a different century or in wholly different circumstances. This involves taking the full measure of our modern situation and entering with full sympathy into the actual experiences, the hopes and fears, of Christian people'.

### **Preaching Christ**

The experimental preaching of the Reformers and Puritans focused on preaching Christ. As Scripture clearly shows, evangelism must bear witness to the record God has given of his only begotten Son (Acts 2:3; 5:42; 8:35; Romans 16:25; 1 Corinthians 2:2; Galatians 3:1). The Puritans thus taught that any preaching in which Christ does not have the pre-eminence is not valid experiential preaching. William Perkins said that the heart of all preaching was to 'preach [only] one Christ by Christ to the praise of Christ'. According to Thomas Adams, 'Christ is the sum of the whole Bible, prophesied, typified, prefigured, exhibited, demonstrated, to be found in every leaf, almost in every line, the Scriptures being but as it were the swaddling bands of the child Jesus'. 'Think of Christ as the very substance, marrow, soul, and scope of the whole Scriptures', advised Isaac Ambrose. In this Christ-centered context, Reformed and Puritan evangelism was marked by a discriminating application of truth to experience.

### **Marks of Grace**

Discriminatory preaching defines the difference between the non-Christian and the Christian. Discriminatory preaching pronounces the wrath of God and eternal condemnation upon the unbelieving and impenitent. But it offers the forgiveness of sins and eternal life to all who, by true faith, embrace Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Such preaching teaches that if our religion is not experiential, we will perish not because experience itself saves, but because Christ who saves sinners must be experienced personally as the rock on whom our eternal hope is built (Matthew 7:22-27; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2:2). The Reformers and Puritans were very aware of the deceitfulness of the human heart. Puritan evangelists in particular took great pains to identify the marks of grace that distinguish the church from the world, true believers from merely professing

believers, and saving faith from temporary faith. Thomas Shepard in *The Ten Virgins*, Matthew Mead in *The Almost Christian Discovered*, Jonathan Edwards in *Religious Affections*, and other Puritans wrote dozens of works to differentiate imposters from true believers. That kind of discriminatory preaching is scarce today. Even in conservative Evangelical churches, head knowledge of scriptural truth is often a substitute for heart experience, or (what is equally unscriptural) heart experience is substituted for head knowledge. Experimental preaching calls for both head knowledge and heart experience; its goal, according to John Murray, is 'intelligent piety'.

### **Brought Home**

Experimental preaching is 'Christianity brought home to men's business and bosoms', said Robert Burns. 'The principle on which experimental religion rests is simply this, that Christianity should not only be known, and understood, and believed, but also felt, and enjoyed, and practically applied'. How different this is from most contemporary preaching! The Word of God is often preached today in a way that will never transform anyone because it never discriminates and never applies. Preaching is reduced to a lecture, a catering to the wishes and needs of people, or a form of experientialism removed from the foundation of Scripture. Such preaching fails to expound from Scripture what the Puritans called 'vital religion': how a sinner is stripped of all his own

righteousness; driven to Christ alone for salvation; finds joy in obedience and reliance upon Christ; encounters the plague of indwelling sin; battles against backsliding; and gains the victory through Christ.

### **Our Great Need**

When God's Word is preached experimentally, the Holy Spirit uses it to transform men, women, and nations. Such preaching transforms because it corresponds to the vital experience of the children of God (Romans 5: 1-11); clearly explains the marks of saving grace in the believer (Matthew 5:3-12; Galatians 5:22-23); proclaims the high calling of believers as the servants of God in the world (Matthew 5:13-16); and shows the eternal destination of believers and unbelievers (Revelation 21:1-9). We desperately need a return to faithful, Reformed experimental preaching today.

## **We Shall Not be Shaken**

*Kaitlin Atmore*

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When I read missionary biographies, I often get discouraged because of the faith they had to follow God anywhere - Amy Carmichael to India, Hudson Taylor to China, Jim Elliot to Ecuador and many others. To them, following and trusting God seemed to be like breathing. You just do it. No questions asked. If you didn't do it, you'd die. For many Christians today though, following God is what you do when you "*feel called*".

We send out missionaries who claim they're God's "*called*". We support them because they're "*called*". But we forget some things, namely, that **all** Christians are called to spread the Gospel, not just some, (Mark 16:14-20), and we lose sight of the One who called us.

Why was it so easy for the aforementioned missionaries to follow God so seemingly effortlessly? How did the men and women featured in Hebrews 11 – The Chapter of Faith - get there? By seeking and obeying the Lord, that's how. If you read the stories of Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Joshua and others, you will find why they had such great lives of faith. It was because they sought the Lord in everything. When they didn't seek him, they fell and fell hard. The Old Testament is full of stories of victories attained only by the Hand of God. Without Him, there was only failure.

In Psalm 16:8-10, David says, "*I have set the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices; my flesh also dwells secure. For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption.*"

In contrast, read what Jeremiah 17:5, 6 says, "*Thus says the Lord: "Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart turns away from the Lord. He is like a shrub in the desert, and shall not see any good come. He shall dwell in the parched places of the wilderness, in an uninhabited salt land."*

When we trust and seek the Lord, we will not be shaken and our whole being shall rejoice and be glad. When we trust man and this world, we're compared to a shrub in the desert – dry and lifeless. Now I ask you, which sounds more appealing? Trusting the Lord or man? Trusting the Lord, of course! If we all were to trust God as much as we unconsciously trust man (i.e. sit in man-made chairs, etc) think just how much we could accomplish for His glory!

When we put all our faith in God, there is no room for self-glorification!

Trials are sent along our way so that our faith may increase. We have hardships so as to learn to depend on the Lord in all things. However, it is not by trials alone that our faith increases. When we seek the Lord in small, daily things our faith begins to grow slowly and surely. It can be difficult to set the Lord before us always. It's hard to wait on Him, because we want things to be done in our time and in our way. But the Lord's way is best. Let us live a life that shows this to be true. We can because, like the psalmist said in Psalm 16:8, "*the Lord is at our right hands and we shall not be shaken!*"

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*“I preached as never sure to preach again, and as a dying man to dying men.”*

*Richard Baxter*

## **Those Who Do the Will of God (Mark 3:31 – 35)**

*Russ Atmore*

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### **Scripture**

**Mark 3:31 – 35**

### **Key Verse**

*“whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother”* Mark 3:35

### **Theme**

It is the responsibility of each and every Christian to do the will of God. I cannot do the will of God for you, and neither can you do the will of God for me. It is a personal responsibility. There is such a thing as corporately obeying the will of God. We do this when we gather as the people of God or even when we simply recognize that we are the Church and that we have certain obligations to God.

### **Exposition**

This passage of Scripture is interesting for one simple reason. You just do not expect what Jesus says in verse 35. The crowd (vs. 32) has told Jesus that his mother and brothers were calling for him outside the house (vs. 31 - see also vs. 20). The reason that his brothers and mother were calling for Jesus seems to be derived from verse 21, where even they consider the Lord *“out of His mind.”*

The crowd honestly point out to the Lord that his mother and brothers were outside calling Him. Jesus gives a perplexing answer in verse 33. Jesus asks who are his mother and brothers. On the surface this is puzzling and almost ludicrous because the answer is so simple. The crowd could not but fail to see that there was something not right in the answer of the Lord as far as simple language was concerned. Jesus then proceeds to answer his own question by saying that those gathered around Him were His mother and brothers, and then to clarify this, He says in verse 35, that whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother.

What does Jesus mean in these words? Jesus was saying that His disciples were His true family. We can only imagine what this would have meant to His brothers and mother. They would have simply reasserted what they said in verse 21. In essence, Jesus has relegated His family to second place in terms of His loyalty. We should not read into this passage insensitivity to family on the part of our Lord. We know from Luke 2:51, 52 & John 19:26, 27 that Jesus was very close to His family and thought of them. Family connections are not the only

important connections in this world though. Family obligations and loyalties do not have priority over God's will and God's family.

In the first place, Jesus is challenging His own natural family. Mary knew that Jesus possessed a higher loyalty to His Father in heaven, and that no earthly ties would ever take precedence over that relationship.

Secondly, Jesus is essentially asking His disciples and others around Him if their relationship to Him was simply a natural one. What Jesus desires from His disciples is the spiritual recognition of the spiritual obligations that binds His disciples to Himself.

Thirdly, Jesus was pointing out the cost of discipleship. Natural family relationships must come second to the relationship to the Lord (see Luke 9:59 – 62). In Luke 14:26, Jesus speaks of hating family in order to be His disciple. What He means by this provocative statement is that we must always consider Christ first in everything. Jesus certainly knew what it meant to be rejected. He came to His own people – they rejected Him (John 1:10, 11). On the Cross, He was rejected by the Father (Mark 15:34; Ps. 22:1).

At the same time, Jesus is encouraging His disciples. If they do His will they are His family. In Luke 8:21, Jesus states that His disciples are those who not only hear His word, but also do it.

### **Application**

No one can do the will of God without help from God. We need the grace and power of the Lord to do His will (see Eph. 2:8; Phil. 2:12, 13). We must not interrupt our Lord like Jesus' brothers and mother did. It seems as if many in the church know better than the Lord of the Church. He has told us how to worship, but we know better. He has told us how to evangelize, but we know better. He has told us how to love Him, but we know better. The disciple is never above His Master in this aspect. We must let nothing impede our obligation to do the will of God – thus we shall demonstrate that we belong to Jesus.

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*“Doers of the Word are the best hearers.”*

*Thomas Watson*

# Bible Quiz

Kaitlin Atmore

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## Christian Workers, Preachers & Missionaries

A E N O T S G N I V I L D I V A D  
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Jim Elliot   Nate Saint   Amy Carmichael   Hudson Taylor  
 Elisabeth Elliot   David Livingstone   Brother Andrew   John Wesley   Lottie Moon   William Tyndale  
 Mary Slessor