

THE BAPTIST LANDMARK

“REMOVE NOT THE ANCIENT LANDMARK, WHICH THY FATHERS HAVE SET.” PROVERBS 22:28

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GRIEVING THE SPIRIT

by Greg Dunham

Ephesians 4:30, “And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.”

I wonder if we all could count the number of times we have heard admonition from the pulpit and the pew encouraging us to “grieve not the Spirit,” followed by encouragement to just follow the Lord? The above referenced scripture is the primary basis for this, but it means more. I would also encourage people to be careful to follow the promptings of the Holy Spirit which gives direction to our actions, and I heartily concur that it is so taught here. But this verse is not given to a private interpretation, or cannot be looked at as a single verse without a consideration of the adjoining text.

This fourth chapter of Ephesians is Paul admonishing the brethren at Ephesus to fulfill their calling from God into the Church, and by extension Holiness. He reminds them of the Gifts given them for their sanctification and growth before calling to their minds the child like state they began in, and the need to speak the truth in love. Having laid this groundwork, Paul encourages the brethren to no longer walk as other Gentiles, and points out a number of issues in that type of walk, including lasciviousness, thievery and corrupt communication. Then comes verse 30. Followed as you may expect by verse 31. “Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice.”

This brings us to a conclusion that there is more involved in not grieving the Spirit than not making a talk, or singing a song, or speaking to some lost soul about their eternal condition (all of which should be done at the prompting of the Spirit.) It seems that Paul is saying that if I harbor bitterness in my heart, it grieves the Spirit. If I am guilty of feeling wrath towards my brother, it grieves the Spirit. If anger is festering in my inward parts, it grieves the Spirit. If the tumult of clamor is in my life, it grieves the Spirit. If I find

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WORK OF THE SPIRIT

by H. B. Little

For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. Acts 1:5.

The Lord Jesus made this promise to His young church before His ascension back to His Father. This was the promise of another Comforter for the church. They had been commissioned to disciple the whole world—a daunting task for a church of 120 people. Jesus had organized them, led them, taught them, and worked wonders among them for the three years. And He was leaving them—making the work seem impossible. Jesus was showing them the way forward. He would be with them and empower them through the promised Holy Ghost—which came upon them on the Pentecost following these words. Some have misunderstood these words of the Lord. They believe and teach that the Spirit did not work on or dwell in the hearts of men before this Pentecost. This is a gross misunderstanding of God’s word. Let’s consider the work of the Spirit in the hearts of men before the outpouring of the Holy Ghost.

First, let’s consider the Spirit’s work in the conviction of sin. We are taught in the New Testament that godly sorrow—a sorrow that comes from God—works repentance unto salvation. Unless the Spirit convicts of sin, no one can be saved. Were people convicted of their sins by the Spirit in the Old Testament as they are today? Were people thereby saved in the Old Testament as they are today?

Let’s consider the first man, Adam. When Adam transgressed God’s law in Eden by eating of the forbidden tree, did God deal with him in his sinful state? Moses tells us that they *heard the voice of the Lord God* and that they *hid themselves from the presence of the Lord*. He also tells us that *the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?* Gen 3:8-9. If God had so chose, He could appeared unto them without them hearing Him coming. He knew exactly where they

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CHURCH CONTINUITY

by M. A. Brawner

A Historical Line from the New Testament to Honey Grove, Texas

Throughout history, the Lord has preserved a visible, identifiable Church practicing the ordinances and doctrines given by Christ. This Church is not defined by hierarchy, architecture, or state sanction, but by fidelity to scriptural truth, especially in its administration of baptism and its local, autonomous structure. The Baptists, as they came to be known, have long held that their Churches trace their doctrinal lineage to the Church Jesus Christ referred to as “My Church” in *Matthew 16:18*: “*And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*”

This Church did not suddenly appear in America, but arrived here after enduring centuries of intense persecution across Europe. Many of the Lord’s Churches passed through the Piedmont valleys, where faithful believers, such as the Waldenses, refused to submit to papal authority and clung to the teachings of Christ despite relentless opposition. These assemblies, preserving the ordinances and purity of New Testament doctrine, often met in mountain caves and remote forests, hunted as heretics by state and religious authorities. Likewise, in the vales of Wales, groups of baptized believers continued under threat of imprisonment and death, worshiping in secret and preserving the faith once delivered to the saints. Their afflictions reflected the truth of *John 15:20*: “*The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you...*” From these blood-stained regions, faithful remnants migrated, by necessity and by conviction, to new lands, carrying the authority and practices of the Lord’s Churches with them to the New World.

When Baptist Churches came to the shores of the United States, they did not escape persecution. Although America is

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myself speaking evil of others, it grieves the Spirit. If these all lead me to a point of malice towards my fellow man, it grieves the Spirit. Brethren, let us be honest with ourselves and God. We are all found somewhere in verse 31.

In Colossians 3:8, Paul speaks along the same lines when He says "But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth." Notice that it is the wording of Paul for them to put off all these things, as if it were their responsibility. Paul is specifically speaking here to those who are risen with Christ and have put on Christ. It is the absolute duty of Church members to continuously improve their lives. It is never acceptable to point to another brother or sister who is failing God to justify your own faults. God means for you to mortify the deeds of the flesh, which simply means to kill them, or purge them from our life.

This brings us to point we wish to consider, which is anger. Noah Webster offers the following definition of anger, although we all understand it too well. "A violent passion of the mind excited by a real or supposed injury; usually accompanied with a propensity to take vengeance, or to obtain satisfaction from the offending party. This passion however varies in degrees of violence, and in ingenuous minds, may be attended only with a desire to reprove or chide the offender."

So anger is that emotion we feel when we perceive that we have been done wrong that leads us to desire revenge. Notice that I have said we perceive that we have been done wrong. Anger can arise in us when there is no real injury to our person. The reason this is so, is that anger is one of the tools of the father of lies, Satan, and he is skilled at making us feel wronged. It is incumbent on us to be very diligent not to get caught in this snare of the devil. A person working under the influence of anger is quick to seek, and if possible, execute vengeance. (Hebrews 10:30 specifically, along with a multitude of other verses, teach us that vengeance belongs to the Lord. It might be wise to not steal what belongs to God.)

In a practical sense, the deceiver will often approach you with fear and

frustration. I think of Elijah just here. Elijah went up Mount Carmel, prayed for fire from Heaven, and was answered by God. The prophets of Baal and the Groves were slain. He then asked seven times for rain, when it had not rained for several years, and again was answered by God. You then see him girding up his loins and running before the chariot of Ahab, no doubt in the strength of the Spirit of God. Surely, the people would now change. They had seen or heard of the miracle of God, and felt the rain falling. But, Satan had his agent, and word came from Queen Jezebel that she intended to take his life. Fear took hold of him, and he fled. The fear quickly was replaced with frustration, as we find the prophet under a Juniper tree, asking God to let him die. The frustration shows not only in his request for death, but in his reasoning for the request, "It is enough, oh Lord." Elijah had done what God desired, had accomplished his task, and felt the mighty power of God resting on Him. Still, there was not the reform of the people he had expected to see. I should imagine we have all been somewhere close to the Juniper tree, bemoaning our lack of seeing what we expected to see from God. How easy it would have been for Satan to turn that to anger in a lesser man, be it at Jezebel, the people, or even God Himself. But to Elijah's credit it didn't seem to work that way. I am persuaded that is because of his absolute reliance on the Creator.

I would ask if you ever find yourself frustrated? Be it from a lack of response when you are trying to follow God, or some other means. Honesty, will most likely lay that at all of our feet. This then is the point to be very careful, and trust the unerring hand of God. Often we believe the prompting of the Spirit, and act on it, with full expectation of some particular outcome, only to be frustrated. Yet the promises of God must be true. It has been my experience, that God does not often share the details of His plans. He called Abram to go into a country which He would show him, not a country God explained all about before he left Ur of the Chaldees. Paul seems to be safeguarding us against such things when He says, "I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase." The outcome is not ours to worry about. So why do we need to get frustrated about outcomes that are most likely just something from our imagination? Again, God does not usually

share the details of His plans. He just tells us what to do.

Brethren let us not walk in the way of anger. The danger, not only to ourselves, but to our brother, whose welfare should be considered before our own, is great. Many a family has been divided thus, oftentimes over supposed slights that really never happened. Let us consider our own selves, whether we be in the faith (which must include this question of anger) or not. Let us consider our own happiness in this life which God does desire for us, but anger will strip us of. Let us consider the well being of all of our churches, which has been damaged no doubt by anger festering in the hearts of God's people. And finally, if we indeed find that seed of anger in us (no matter how small it may be) let us quickly take the matter to throne of grace, and plead our failings to God with the confident expectation that the blood of Christ can cleanse us from even this iniquity.

BAPTIST TRUTH RADIO

We are glad to inform you of a new radio mission effort, *The Baptist Truth Radio Broadcast*.

The Baptist Truth is broadcasting on Wilkins Radio Network, which has many local stations throughout the country and a listen on demand option. The listen on demand option allows folks to listen at their convenience and to share the broadcast with others. The current broadcast schedule is below.

On Demand	https://www.wilkinsradio.com/our-programs/the-baptist-truth/		
WCPC AM/ FM	Tupelo, MS	7 PM CST	Monday
KCNW AM/ FM	Kansas City, KS	6:30 PM CST	Thursday
WELP AM/ FM	Greenville, SC	7 PM CST	Friday
KKIM AM	Albuquerque, NM	8:30 AM MDT	Saturday
WUMY AM/ FM	Memphis, TN	9 AM CST	Saturday
WBXR AM/ FM	Huntsville, AL	4 PM CST	Saturday
WITK AM/ FM	Wilkes Barre/ Scranton, PA	7 PM EST	Saturday
WYYC AM/ FM	York, PA	7:30 PM EST	Saturday
KLCE AM/ FM	Dallas/Ft. Worth, TX	9 AM CST	Saturday

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were, yet He asked, "Adam, where are you?" God was dealing with Adam and his sin. He wanted Adam to be afraid and sorrow over his sin. He convicted Adam of His sin. The first man knew godly sorrow. He was convicted by the Spirit.

Let's consider the pre-flood people. Speaking of them, the Lord told Noah, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man...his days shall be an hundred and twenty years." Gen 6:3. God was declaring at what time He would destroy the world by flood. Yet he strove with them until their destruction came. Peter tells us by what means the Lord strove with them. He says that *by the Spirit...He [Christ] went and preached unto them.* 1 Pe 3:19. Did Jesus physically go to earth and preach to men in the days of Noah? No. He strove with them through the Spirit. He convicted by the Spirit.

Let's consider the testimony of David. He writes, "The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow. Then called I upon the name of the Lord; O Lord, I beseech thee, deliver my soul." Psa 116:3-4. The sorrow and pain of soul that David felt, was it a worldly sorrow? Or was it a sorrow from God by the Spirit? A sorrow of the world works death. A sorrow from God works repentance unto salvation. David's sorrow brought him low, and in that low state God delivered his soul. David gives clear testimony of his conviction by the Spirit. That conviction brought him to saving faith.

Next, let's consider the Spirit's work in the witness of pardon. We are taught in the New Testament that we know the Lord. We have a know-so salvation. God's Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are His children. Rom 8:16. The know-so is by the Spirit.

Let's consider again the testimony of David. After he *called upon the name of the Lord*, he writes, "Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee." Psalm 116:7. The Lord interacted with David. The Spirit gave him something that he knew about—rest for his troubled soul. That's the witness of pardon by the Spirit.

Let's consider the testimony of Jesus concerning Peter's know-so salvation. A few months before our Lord's passion, He asked His disciples, "Whom do men say

that I am?" They answered according to what they had heard. Then the Lord asked a more direct question, "Whom say ye that I am?". Simon was bold to answer, as usual. He said, "Thou art the Christ." Peter knew Him to be Messiah, the Son of God, and the Savior of the world. Jesus' response tells us why Peter could be so bold in his answer. "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." Mat 16:13-17. Peter could be sure that Jesus was Savior because no man had convinced him. He knew because God had convinced him. He had something know-so by the Spirit of God. And he had it before the outpouring of the Holy Ghost.

God's plan of redemption and the work of the Spirit in redemption has never changed. God dealt with the first man the same way He will deal with the last man that ever will be saved.

What did our Lord mean when He said, "ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence"? Acts 1:5. The promise of the Comforter was to *endue with power from on high.* Luke 24:49. This word *power* means a working power, an achieving power. It implies capability. The ability to carry out the world wide commission is predicated on the Lord being with His church through this work of the Spirit. The Lord was with Old Testament Israel in this way also. Let's consider a few examples.

First, let's consider Moses. Moses was tending sheep in the wilderness of Sinai when God called on Moses to deliver God's people from Egypt. Moses had fled for his life from the king of Egypt many years before. Moses doubted his capability to deliver the people, and rightly so. He asked, *who am I?* The Lord gave him comfort. God said, *Certainly I will be with thee...I will stretch out my hand with all my wonders...I will be with thy mouth.* Exo. 3-4. God endued Moses with power to do the work, and Moses prevailed.

Next, let's consider Joshua. Moses died in the wilderness on the journey from Egypt to Canaan. And the Lord appointed Joshua to lead the people into Canaan. Giants and walled cities awaited the Israelites. The conquest of Canaan was a daunting task to say the least. Yet the Lord gave Joshua comfort saying, *There shall not any man be able to stand before thee...as I was with Moses, so I will be*

with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. Jos. 1:5. God endued Joshua with power to do the work, and Joshua prevailed.

Time would fail to tell of the judges, kings, prophets, and priests whom God endued with power to keep the Old Testament faith. The Spirit worked in the Old Testament organized people of God—the nation of Israel. This work was carried out by individual men that God raised up when *the Spirit of the Lord came upon them.* See Judges 3:10, 6:34, 11:29, 14:6, 1 Sa. 10:10, etc.

The Lord now works in the organized people of God—His churches. This work is no longer carried out by individuals that God raises up, but He works in the people collectively. When the Comforter came to the church *they were ALL filled with the Holy Ghost*, Acts 2:4. Thus the promise of Jeremiah was fulfilled. *And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: For they shall all know me, From the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord.* Jer 31:34.

The work of God at the famed Pentecost did not change the way that God convicts sinners. It did not change the way that God saves sinners. It changed the way God works among His people. No judge, king, prophet, or priest sits in Moses' seat guiding the people. The Lord personally guides His churches through the Spirit. His churches have the working power through the Spirit.

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WUMY AM/ FM	Memphis, TN	9:30 PM CST	Saturday
KGMS AM	Tucson, AZ	10 AM MST	Sunday
KERI AM	Bakersfield, CA	11:30 AM PDT	Sunday
KCNW AM/ FM	Kansas City, KS	4 PM CST	Sunday
KWDF AM/ FM	Alexandria, LA	5 PM CST	Sunday
WWTJ AM/FM	Pensacola, FL	6 PM CST	Sunday

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CHURCH CONTINUITY

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often remembered as a land of religious freedom, many early Baptists suffered under those who practiced state-sponsored religion. In colonial America, especially in New England, laws enforced by Puritan or Anglican authorities led to fines, imprisonment, and even physical punishment of Baptists who refused infant baptism or government-controlled worship services. These believers insisted that baptism was for repentant believers only and must be by immersion, practices grounded in Scripture, such as Acts 8:36-38, where the Ethiopian eunuch declares his belief and is baptized by Philip: *"If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest... and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him."*

Despite persecution, the number of Baptist Churches multiplied. Their doctrinal conviction and faithfulness to biblical principles ensured that the truth was not extinguished. The Lord honored their obedience and endured with them as He said when He commissioned them, *Matt 28:20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*

One of the most pivotal moments in Baptist history in America came with the establishment of the Sandy Creek Church in North Carolina in 1755, under the leadership of Shubal Stearns. This Church became the catalyst for Baptist expansion throughout the Southern states. From Sandy Creek, a revival of missionary zeal went forth, resulting in the organization of numerous Churches dedicated to maintaining the faith and order of the New Testament.

Among those was the Grassy Creek Baptist Church, a body organized under the same scriptural principles. From this Church, missionaries were sent out to preach and to plant Churches grounded in the doctrines of Christ. These men fulfilled the Great Commission, as commanded by Jesus in *Matthew 28:19-20: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them... Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you..."*

One of the missionaries who originated at the Grassy Creek Church was R.Y. Blaylock, a man who carried the gospel

and the Church's authority westward to Southern California. There, he helped organize Churches that held to the same pattern of doctrine, baptism, and local Church authority as those before them. These Churches viewed baptism as an ordinance entrusted to Churches possessing scriptural authority, administered only to those who gave a clear testimony of salvation.

In organizing Churches, Blaylock and his contemporaries followed the pattern of Acts 14:23: *"And when they had ordained them elders in every Church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord..."* Each Church remained autonomous, yet doctrinally aligned, practicing the ordinances as handed down from the Lord through His Churches.

Among the Churches established in this movement was the Ontario Missionary Baptist Church in Ontario, California. This Church would later organize the Pedley Missionary Baptist Church, which eventually became known as the Jarupa Valley Missionary Baptist Church. These Churches continued in the pattern of baptizing only professed believers, by immersion, under the authority of a true New Testament Church.

While the Church still carried the name of Pedley, a missionary arm was extended to Honey Grove, Texas. On June 9, 1976, that mission was established as an independent Church, carrying forward the same doctrines and practices taught by Christ and continued by the apostles and faithful Churches throughout the centuries. Today, the Missionary Baptist Church of Honey Grove still practices the same baptism, observes the same Lord's Supper, and preaches the same gospel that was committed to the early Church in *Jude 1:3: "...ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."*

This doctrinal lineage is not based on name, fame, or numbers, but on biblical authority and obedience. Jesus promised that His Church would endure in *Matthew 16:18*, and Baptists who hold to the scriptural teaching of Church perpetuity believe that this promise has been kept—not through a succession of bishops or councils, but through local Churches maintaining New Testament order, doctrine, and authority, generation after generation.

The Church in Honey Grove, now marking 49 years of uninterrupted existence, stands as a testimony to that promise. Like those in *Revelation 2-3*, each Church is accountable to the Lord, and yet, each Church represents a candlestick, illuminating the truth of the gospel in its generation.

This Church, and others like it, cling to 1 Timothy 3:15: *"...the house of God, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."* That truth includes the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith, baptism as the means that a child of God enters the Church, and local Church autonomy under the headship of Christ, as stated in *Colossians 1:18: "And He is the head of the body, the church..."*

The preservation of the Lord's Church across centuries has not been without cost. From colonial jail cells to dusty missionary roads, the faithful have labored so that succeeding generations may still gather under the authority of a New Testament Church. These Churches do not invent new doctrine, they hold fast to the old paths, as instructed in *Jeremiah 6:16: "Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein..."*

The story of the Missionary Baptist Church of Honey Grove is more than a tale of local legacy, it is part of an unbroken doctrinal lineage affirming the words of Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church. It is a legacy that calls each Church today to guard the ordinances, preach the gospel, and maintain purity in doctrine and practice.

As Paul charged Timothy, so too must faithful Churches in every age *"Hold fast the form of sound words..."* (2 Timothy 1:13). Until the Lord returns for His bride, may each local, scriptural Church continue to shine as a candlestick, holding forth the word of life in a dark world.

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