THOUGHTS OF AUGUST, 2017

1. During our years while Living! among a certain group of saints I heard that they were planning to buy and give us a new car, simply because our current car was coming apart. We “needed” many things, including a car, but did not have a needy attitude. We were not a needy people. The Lord supplied all of our needs, so how could we be needy? At times we were a bit “wanty,” but we dealt with that faithfully, also.

So, instead of having an unfulfilled life we had a fulfilled attitude, meaning that we knew we had everything day by day that we needed in order to do all that we needed in the Lord’s plan for us. That was real and true. When I heard of their pending gift of a car, I let it be known that we would not accept their gift. Why? Because too many of that group could do with better cars themselves. My thoughts and action were similar to David’s in 1 Chronicles 11:17. I had a God-allowed opportunity but turned it down for the more excellent way of love – 1 Cor. 12:31.

In the Old Testament, adult male Israelites were exempted from battle if they qualified in any one of three ways: 1) If they had just built a new house, 2) if they had just planted a vineyard, or 3) if they had become engaged to a woman. See Deuteronomy 20:5-7. In the next verse, in too close of a relationship to those first three verses for my flesh to be comfortable, 4) the fearful man was also allowed to leave the field of battle before the battle started. Those four permissions were granted by the Lord and by the military leaders of Israel. The exemptions did not need to be accepted, but they were offered. Perhaps it could be put this way: “It’s man-up time, or go home.” All four groups could accept or reject the offer, according to what of higher order might be going on in their souls.

In Luke 14, Jesus had just completed a teaching on being invited to a feast, and how to invite others to your own feast. In short, He said to be humble when invited, and to invite the humble. Then He dealt with the problem of invitees not coming to your feast. Those who turned down the invitation had very similar reasons to those who were exempted from battle: 1) One had just bought a piece of land and needed to check it out [similar to having just built a house], 2) Another had just bought some oxen and needed to try them out [similar to having just planted a vineyard, because the oxen tilled the vineyard], and 3) the third had just married a wife [similar to having just become engaged]. Notice that each of those reasons were appropriate for fools; each had made a major commitment and paid the cost of the commitment, but did not know anything about the quality of that to which they had committed themselves. I will venture to say that the 4th reason to decline [fear in battle] would be our fear of being among those invited to Jesus’ feast when we knew we did not have the festive garment of righteousness and discipleship.

What was the outcome of these three groups of invitees not coming to the feast? “For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste of my dinner.” So that we would get the clear message from His teaching, He immediately began teaching about discipleship. “If anyone comes to Me [Yes, it is still “whosoever will” to the Lord may come – ed.], and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple [coming to Him but declining discipleship = not good – ed.]. Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. … So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions.” He said that to those who had come to Him about the matter of going on with Him. That’s Luke 14:7-35.

There is something [MUCH SOMETHING] that is offered to those who come to Him. It is called discipleship. Discipleship is the giving of one’s self to another, to be made like the other, by the other. Christian discipleship is a disciplining of a Christian person into the likeness of Jesus, a process of growth by faith in that which Jesus has already done when He placed of Himself into the believer. That process between the new disciple and Jesus is significantly enhanced and extended by an already-discipled or being-discipled mentor.

Here is the good news and the bad news all in one news. No doubt that you saw it: The Christian is offered an exemption from discipleship. As in the Old Testament and in the Gospel, the choice is in the hands of the believers. We can accept the invitation of “Come and get it” now, or we can stay home now and miss the feast. That is a very real invitation and a very real feast and a very real blessing or loss. The life is now and the feast is soon coming. Observation: Christians don’t know about discipleship. We think they are disciples simply because we are Christians, or because we are satisfied with that which we have in basic salvation.

1. This Thought is on marriage and civil government [the state]. It is no surprise that civil governments are components of the kingdom of this world. As such, they have a world-focus on and for those things they control. Their world-focus is variable, depending on their degree of Christianization.

Here is the problem: Civil governments did not start and do not own all things that they [try to] control. Civil governments are limited, weak, and come and go over the centuries. Their limits are defined or influenced by the people. The people’s notions of civil government authority are informed by their religion. If the people are secular, and the government is secular, the government thinks it should control everything and makes an effort to do exactly that – control everything.

The state, having legally “recognized” something, such as Christian-based marriage, then begins to step into marriage with laws and ordinances. That is a major problem; a major encroachment. He, the Lord, who designed and has the patent on marriage, cannot be shoved aside by the state as if the state had designed and patented, and can define and control marriage. Regulating and redefining marriage becomes a major encroachment of the kingdom of this world into the kingdom of God. [This can be said also of abortion, morality, etc.]

Marriage depends on government to recognize and enforce its rights, as do single individuals, but government does not “own” marriage – God does. This conflict will end in the High Court, where the Lord always wins.

1. We may have a choice to make, whether to work for revival, reformation, or repudiation. If we want revival, be careful of how we are defining revival. If our want is for the Lord to stir “OUR” church with His Holy Spirit so that we will have more people and money [perhaps only money is adequate!], we should continue ignoring the Lord and just stay with our programs and “get excited” pep squads. That’s if what we want is “us as we are with a smear of Christian religiosity on us.”

If we want something deeper, such as reformation, go for it – but remember that the religious powers of the church have never allowed essential changes to be made. Martin Luther accomplished some degree of reformation, but not much. Eventually he replaced one religious system with a similar one.

That leaves us with repudiation, meaning that we would need to see what it is in Christian religion’s many forms that needs to be done away with, not energized. What could that possibly be?! The answer is that anything that lessens or obscures Jesus Christ’s reality and headship needs to be repudiated – not energized or reformed. The church is full of those dear things and practices. If that were done, each branch of Christianity would lose their special identity, leaving Christ and believers. That thought is exciting. Do you see the brick wall?

More on this in Thought No. 11.

1. This is a marketplace-type Thought for the serious Christian. If you were shopping for a new car, and a salesman tried to sell you a new one for $5,000., that ridiculously low price would be a red flag to you. You might be interested in looking into his joke or scam, but you would know that that car cost too little to be a good deal. Something was wrong with it or the deal. Although we are always looking for a bargain, the short of it would be, “It doesn’t cost enough, so I’m not interested.”

The same goes for that which you are after of the Lord. It might be said this way, “If it doesn’t cost enough, I’m not interested. I want the real thing and I know that the real thing is too precious to get it cheaply.” So, if one Sunday morning you began thinking, “I’ll stay home from meeting with the saints today, sleep in, read the newspaper, and the Lord will do a great thing in me,” we would probably recognize that that thought was inappropriate. It probably had a sinister person behind it, not the Lord. It is the Lord who calls us to discipleship via our own crosses daily. He reminds us that it is our abiding in Him, and His word abiding in us, that springs from the real thing going on between us and Him, and that the real thing brings forth more of the real thing. He does wonders, some just because He wants to, others in response to us.

I’ll pitch in an example. Last Winter the Lord told me to fast on water-only for a week; I did. It was a great time. I experienced no hunger, my body lost 12 pounds, and I got a bit wobbly. It was a great time with the Lord and others. Two days after the fast I noticed that my knees, which had swollen and hurt continually and increasingly for years, including during the fast, were now well. They have stayed well ever since, and daily I am on an exercise bike building them up. I had not been able to do that in many years. The Lord healed them after the fast, not during, apparently associated with my obedience. That which orthopedic surgeons could not do, short of already threatening me with knee replacements, the Lord did.

It is common that the Lord lays out a costly payment, then rewards us accordingly when we pay the price. Jesus’ Father required the same of Him. When I find myself going through a trial, and I embrace it, I know that a payoff is coming – sooner or later.

1. A point on leadership. Leadership is a responsibility and function. Leaders lead. Leaders have already been where they intend to lead others, or they confess that lack but are confident of being able to lead the way because they will follow the blazed trail. Leaders are in the lead.

Some examples of leadership: 1) When Israel is at war and the names and ranks of their fallen soldiers are released, notice the high number of sergeants and officers on the list. Their leaders lead. In fact, in battle their call is: “Follow me.” 2) In the U. S. Marines, rank does not designate order in chow lines. Officers and soldiers do not line up as they come -- first come, first served. Higher ranks keep to the back of the line. If lower ranks continue coming in, the higher ranks continue holding back in line. That’s another example of leadership.

1. A definition of coincidence: When two events are connected by God but no one wants to admit it.
2. This comes from a reasonably reliable source. In the early church, an apostle was one who taught that which the first apostles taught. That which had been taught was well known among the established churches. Any deviation indicated to the churches that the teacher was not an apostle. That opens up some additional thinking about what an apostle is, doesn’t it.
3. In Luke 24:30-35 the Lord blessed the bread, broke it, and fed them. Then they recognized Him and He disappeared from before their eyes. You noticed that the blessing of the bread did not open their eyes. Indeed, blessings alone can weld our eyes closed, and seeking of blessings can indicate that our eyes are already welded closed. The breaking of the bread and its use as food was necessary for them to see their friend for who He was. He was their bread, their blessed bread, their blessed bread broken, and then their blessed bread broken and given. Receiving the blessings and the breakings of Jesus’ body [us] opens our eyes, allows us to see Him better [clearer and more often], and progresses us onward in His eternal plans for us.
4. The enemy, the devil, who the Lord Jesus defeated, cannot defeat any believers unless we are first deceived. We have been handed victory, not the battle. We do battle but it is now against our unbelief. Possessed faith guarantees that we share in Jesus’ ongoing outcomes, which are always victories no matter the cost during our struggles to believe. Because truth is one of our weapons, it is important that we know the truth so we will not be subject to the devil’s lies and roarings. Those who know the truth are continually overcoming lies and unbelief, thus they are called overcomers. The preeminence of Jesus Christ is constantly [well, almost constantly] being displayed in our lives. Again, the devil cannot control those whom he cannot deceive.
5. As I was organizing my thoughts and selecting some verses for a teaching on giving and taking correction, I noticed that everything that came to mind had to do with fools, foolishness, the wise, and wisdom. In short, the wise take to being corrected and the foolish do not. Along that line, it became apparent that the individuals and events that made the biblical record were either fools for God [which made them wise in God] or were simply fools [although perhaps wise in human ways]. So, I studied foolishness and wisdom, easily completing my study on giving and taking correction.

Here are some examples that the Lord dangled before my eyes:

1. Adam was so very gently corrected by the Lord, but Adam said, “My wife; she did it.” He blamed another person, staying on the natural level.
2. Eve was corrected, and said, “The devil made me do it.” She placed her blame on the spiritual or emotional level.
3. Cain, their firstborn son, murdered his brother and was banished into the world. His complaint to the Lord was, “God, my punishment is too severe. All I did was kill my brother, and you are throwing me off the farm. You are a harsh God.” He had poor ability to evaluate, due to his unrepentance.
4. King Saul, when corrected, went home and pouted. He blamed everyone, then blamed David because David was doing better in every way than he was.
5. Eli did not properly train and correct his sons. They were doing wrong and getting away with it because their dad and they were big shots. So, he and they lost their jobs and died early. Staying straight with God and man leads to life getting only better.
6. King Nebuchadnezzar III was chastised by the Lord’s writing on a wall about the soon-coming end of his kingdom. He pooped in his pants but did not repent of his sin, guaranteeing the fulfillment of the prophetic word.
7. Jonah eventually obeyed the Lord but did not repent in his heart. He pouted and ground his teeth, while everyone else repented and lived.

So, how do you do when corrected, or when you correct someone? Your answer can show how well the Lord’s love flows through you. Have you labored long and hard to correct a fool? A load of truth fed into a fool’s mind/intellect does not change a fool’s character. A fool can know the right answers but will not apply them appropriately. He will either do something else deliberately, or will not know when to do the right thing.

An extrabiblical proverb, first found in the writings of 1500s English literature [therefore considered to be “wisdom of the ancients”] says, “A fool and his money are soon parted.” Its usual understanding is that a fool soon spends his money, then is left broke. Another understanding is that it is easy to get money from foolish people. Moochers know to whom they can go to borrow and not pay it back. Some moneyed people are foolish so their money flows out unwisely. They have a bounty but it goes out steadily without returning or being spent wisely. Some wisdom from the Lord on this matter:

1. Psalm 14:1 – “The fool has said in his heart, ‘There is no God.’ They are corrupt, they have committed abominable deeds; there is no one who does good.” A wise person who knows God’s word would avoid going into business with someone who truly believes there is no God. The wisest Person of all persons knows the character of that atheist and is giving us advance information about him.
2. Proverb 1:7 – “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.” Why did early America’s institutions of lower and higher learning always study the Bible? Not usually because it was the only book available. Only partly because they wanted to construct a righteous society. Mostly because they wanted to arrange the minds of their students in such a way that their teachers could communicate with them and that their education would make sense to them. They knew that instructors’ minds and students’ minds had to properly match.
3. Proverb 3:11 – “My son, do not reject the discipline [instruction – ed.] of the Lord or loathe His reproof, for those whom the Lord loves He reproves, even as a father corrects the son in whom He delights.” Question: What percent of your being corrected come directly from the Lord, and what percent come through another route [human, situational]? Your considered answer can indicate how spiritually sensitive you are, or are not.
4. Proverb 15:32 – “He who neglects discipline despises himself, but he who listens to reproof acquires understanding [lit. “heart” –ed.]. That’s good! Read that with real meaning: “If I don’t seek after opportunities for being disciplined, I’m despising myself.” As a medical doctor, I sought discipline/improvement by reading medical journals and by going to medical teachings. Many professions and non-professions do that. If we don’t pursue continual discipline, we quickly trash ourselves and do our patients and customers injustice. Good athletes are noted for regular and intense “discipline.”
5. Proverb 24:7 – “Wisdom is too exalted for a fool, he does not open his mouth in the gate.” Opening one’s mouth is to drink in/absorb/learn that which is being said by those who know more than you know. The wise men of the city sat at the city gates and dispensed judgment and wisdom for the people, to those who would open their mouths [minds] widely like a baby bird being fed. Where are the city gates in Corpus Christi? Answer: Look around this room.
6. More thinking about Thought No. 3. The Lord is always working to make changes in His people, individually and corporately. His people are the church. He works on us by His Spirit. Some of His workings are quiet and steady; others are profound and seem episodic. But in individuals and in the church in general so much of His work seems to be without lasting effect on earth. Consider:
7. Revival/Renewal: The thinking goes, “The church is sleeping, so simply needs awakening. We need the Holy Spirit to anoint someone(s) to begin the process. Since the church has had many great revivals, that is what is again needed. Basic change is not a large need in revival [except in individuals], mostly just ‘more life’ – a spark that will jolt us out of our complacency and restore something of the power of the former church. If our eyes can be opened, all will get better.”

So, the Lord pours out His Holy Spirit. We again see biblical signs and wonders as evidence of God among His people. But those revivals do not reach deeper into the church than would last a few years, perhaps 5 or 10. That leads us to wonder what is it in the church that was not fixed by revival; what was left untouched? Answer: Those many untouchable things. Those things of the kingdom of the world that have been instituted within the church. The focus of the church on the church, instead of on Jesus Christ and His calling of all of His people to their crosses.

Today, many are being called to Jesus, but they are rejecting the church. They are looking for reality. They are looking for a place to lay down their lives in return for the life of Jesus Christ. The church needs to show and tell the searchers what they are looking for and how to get it.

1. Reformation: In this approach, the thrust of God and man for change in the church is thought to start at the top of human leadership. Unscriptural practices are confronted, nicely at first, then perhaps more firmly as needed. It is presumed that identifying problems, fixing wrongs, and applying Scriptural solutions will reform the church because its leaders will recognize their unscriptural practices, will repent and change their ways. But the church has fallen into the hand of the church, and the church is not about to relinquish its control of Christ’s body, His bride.

Martin Luther did this with some results, mainly divisiveness, years of wars, and discord in the church that persists today. On the contrary, the Head of the church prayed for our unity, that we would function as a unit – John 17. His example was that He was put out from among His people, even to death; but He did not separate, did not rebel, but He absorbed man’s sins into Himself and took it to the grave, leaving it there. He calls us to take up our crosses and do the same – not separating unto the death, not breaking covenant unto the death.

But Jesus was not a revivalist or a renewer in those ways. And He was not a reformer. He called everyone to Himself, not to the group. He called them to Him, not to “us.” He said, “Follow Me,” not “Follow us,” and certainly not “Follow them” or “Follow the church.” We are not called to the church, but to Jesus and to His words which are the truth. He is the way, the truth, the life. The church does not possess Him; we are supposed to be possessed by Him. If that is true of us, it will show.

1. Something basic but as yet unseen needs to be changed or rejected. The kingdom of this world has entered into the church and is thought to be the church. The tares are taking that which was for the wheat. It’s called Life. The wheat is present with the tares but it is undernourished and dry. The tares are causing sleepiness, death, and division as it pushes itself between the wheat. The tares are religious but they do not have the Life. They have religiosity and use religious words, or they would never be accepted by the church. They appear to have Life but it is Life stolen from the wheat. Tares call the people to the themselves, to the church, to the church’s authority and beauty and forms of worship and liturgies and theologies. Some see these visible, tangible, worldly kingdom things and call them “the church.”

But this is exactly what Jesus, the disciples, and others like Paul had to reject from the beginning. They called others away from that false religious spirit in order to maintain the testimony of Jesus. They were not revivalists or reformers; they simply preached Jesus. They encouraged believers to learn of Jesus, to enter into Jesus, to live in Jesus, and to walk in Jesus. All of Life and Truth flows out of this relationship with Jesus. That which follows from our relationship with Jesus should never replace Him. It will be our temptation as long as we live in our natural bodies to choose natural religiosity [or as much of it as we can] over Holy spirituality. See further in Thought 12.

1. Jesus was not a threat to the Romans. Others who had gathered a following had been threats, but Jesus and His teachings presented no threat to Rome. Pilate was not threatened by Jesus or by any of the charges brought by the Jews against Jesus. Even when Jesus said, “Yes, I am a king, but my kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom was of this world my citizens would fight for me,” Pilate did not feel challenged, but tried to free Him.

Roman centurions honored Jesus while He was alive and when He died, even to saying, “Truly, this was the Son of God.” Christianity was not a threat to Rome in a political or military sense. It was actually benign, even supportive of Rome! Christians were good citizens, paid their taxes, and did many good works. But the devil knew that the two spiritual kingdoms could not coexist, and that his would be on the way out. He had Rome in his pocket, so attacked real Christianity with vigor. For 300 years [10 major persecutions] he killed and enslaved Christians throughout the Roman Empire. After 300 years of losing despite the persecutions, he changed course by making Christianity the religion of the Roman Empire, and Christianity began its decline. Here we are, in modern Roman culture with the kingdom of this world within the church.

1. Jesus knew that His Father had sent Him only to the Jews – Matt. 15:24. In fact, when He sent His disciples out ahead of Him in pairs to prepare villages for His personal ministry, He told them to avoid Gentiles. So, He also deliberately avoided Gentiles, only responding to them when, on rare occasions, He encountered very faithful ones. On those occasions, He had difficulty turning them away because He saw their great faith [greater than that of the Jews] and knew that it was His Father who was drawing them to Him – John 6:44. That presented a conflict [“Go only to the Jews, not to the Gentiles” vs. He saw that His Father was giving faith to Gentiles.] as the promised “light to the Gentiles” was beginning to shine.

In John 12:23 that process appeared to almost startle Him, as if an alarm clock awoke Him from a deep sleep. It was actually a redirection. Some Gentile converts to Judaism were going up to Jerusalem to worship at a feast. They were Jews only by religion, but not of the “lost sheep of the house of Israel.” They asked one of Jesus’ disciples if they could see Jesus. That disciple went to two other disciples, who went to Jesus asking Him if He would see them. The Gentile proselytes were being filtered through the disciples’ protective screen, apparently because they knew He did not want to see Gentiles.

The alarm clock went off. Jesus started teaching that it was His time to be glorified, wheat needed to fall into the ground, not loving one’s own life, and that His servants needed to follow Him if they were to be honored by His Father. And it was time for Him to take stock of His disciples’ progress. First, He turned to His Father and re-committed Himself to His Father’s purposes, and His Father spoke from heaven in the hearing [but not understanding] of the people. Thereafter Jesus’ focus and theme was His soon death.

So, Jesus did not want to carry the gospel to Gentiles. Yet, later, in the Great Commission He told those Jewish disciples [and through them, us] that the gospel is to go into all of the world. But He did not want to kick-start world evangelism by going Himself. He had a very good reason [without needing to understand the reason]; His Father told Him to go only to the Jews.

That brings forth a question that calls for a search of God’s mind – Prov. 25:2 . Why did our Father not want His Son to spread the good news to the Gentiles, want us to do that work, yet did not immediately stimulate the early Christians [who were Jews] to do so more promptly? Part of the answer is that Gentiles needed to be grounded in enlightened, Christianized Judaism. Spreading the gospel was not to be a spiritual free-for-all, although it would be free for all. Enlightened Christianized Jews, such as Paul and in due time the disciples who had been with Jesus, would be sent to the Gentiles.

You notice that the gospel was hard to contain, some of it going out early and without adequate foundation – Acts 8:4-24. The results of that early ministry needed Peter’s and John’s strong backup. The church had to get an understanding of itself, for which the Lord prepared Paul. Post-biblical church history shows that it took a couple of hundred years for the church to form up. Some say the process has not yet been completed. It is still helpful, necessary, and foundational for us to know the Old Testament, be able to apply it accurately, and to know something of those Jewish minds.

1. The Book of the Revelation is one revelation; it is not The Revelations. John was given the book in one revelation. The word comes from the Greek word apocalypse which means the unveiling, disclosure, uncovering, or revealing of something hidden. Of the New Testament books, this book was written last, about 95 A.D. The revealing refers to Jesus Christ and the things to come that relate to Him. Events are shown, but it is the Christ who is revealed.

It is common that The Book of the Revelation causes fear among those who do not know Jesus well so cannot trust Him in fearful circumstances, similar to those who do not know Him at all. That is shown also in the modern use of the word “apocalypse,” which has come to mean simply devastation and tragedy on a large scale. On the contrary, the Lord promises a special blessing for those who read, hear and obey this book – Rev. 1:3.

The western world is having a spiritual crisis, partly because we do not understand or desire or trust the Lord in prophecy. Of course, the cause of our spiritual crisis can be said other ways, from other equally good perspectives. The eastern world is far ahead of us in belief and confidence in prophecy, but much of religion there is non-Christian.

Our understanding of Scripture falls short in many places if we are uneducated in the Jewish Middle East point of view. That means understanding the thinking of the first century. To the early church, the Book of the Revelation was good news.

1. Once we start walking with the Lord in the Spirit, we will be tempted to revert to walking in the flesh; not necessarily an obviously “bad” walk, but it is self-centered, self-approving and self-powered. Our spiritual walk started with lots of smoke and fire, with obvious and definite spiritual provisions and other good results. Would you believe that after a time of such results, some of us begin to get bored? It’s a problem of “the same ole mana every day.” Not that the Lord had forsaken us, but that we want variety, and want variety based on our taste and timing. Yuck! But that’s how our flesh is, and staying on our walk in the Spirit is our way forward.

The Spirit will lead us out of and away from our walk in our flesh. So why don’t we follow the Spirit better? Today’s good answer is that the Spirit’s decisions do not always feel good. Have you too noticed that doing the right thing is also often the more difficult thing, or more costly, or more embarrassing? The easier way attracts us [but may also be the Spirit’s way], so listen to the Lord. Take Mary’s advice – John 2:5.

1. The process is an orderly one. First there is a “leaving” of the son from his father and mother [coordinated separation with maturity and purpose]; then a uniting by committing of the groom’s and bride’s souls [not bodies], and then a uniting of their flesh [sexually] – Gen. 2:24. The Lord Jesus has already “left” His Father, has already become united with believers, and we will soon have a marriage in heaven which will make us one flesh with Him.

Paul explained part of that process when he wrote that when a man and a prostitute [or any non-spouse female] are united sexually they become one flesh. It seems clear that male-female sexual intercourse makes the two one flesh – 1 Cor. 6:16. The question then is, “What all is it to be one flesh?” What happens next? Is flesh oneness a covenant? Are there responsibilities? If so, what are they? Must they be faithfully discharged? How? No wonder Paul said, “Flee fornication!” I think the problem is much greater than we [rightly] make it as we live through and around it. It is a “great mystery.”

Consider that the Lord will not unite in marriage [soon in heaven] with those who are not first united with Him by faith covenant on earth. That would be fornicating.

1. Since the time of Jesus’ finished work at the cross, the sabbath has not been a day of the week. It has nothing to do with not working on a certain day of the week, nor or doing something(s) certain ways at the church house on certain days of the week. It has nothing to do with the calendar or things religious. To keep the sabbath is to abide in Jesus Christ like the branch abides in the vine. As the branch rests in the vine, so do we. We do not struggle to abide, do not work to abide, but do rest in union with the Vine. We trust that the Vine will produce all that we need to live and please and serve Him. Thus, the peaceful fruit of righteousness is produced.

Religious systems want to put us to work, give us something that we must do, in order for us to enter God’s sabbath rest [to be perfectly pleasing to Him]. And work we should, but not to enter into God’s rest. If we do not have faith in the Lord’s ability to bring us to, and to keep us in, that rest we will be forbidden to enter it any other way. Good works of any form or amount will not help. Read that in Hebrews 3 and 4.

1. Well, I’m into my 87th year of earth-life. When I read something like Joel’s word of old men dreaming dreams, or Jesus saying to Peter that when Peter is old, Peter will stretch out his hands and another will dress him and lead him where he would not want to go, I start looking forward to being age-qualified for those dreams, dress-ups, and leadership by another. I’ll let you know when that happens [actually, I’ll let you know when they stop happening].

Some say that our early years as Christians are marked with the opposites – no dreams, dressing ourselves and leading ourselves, that we find it easy to direct our own lives – but that does not seem to hold true. As least it seems to not hold true as the pattern of my life. Read my book, “God’s Doctor: A Texas Physician and the Miracles of God.” It’s mostly about the Lord during my early and middle years of walking with Him.