

# THE BELLEVILLE MESSENGER

October 12

2008

## *Are You Different?*

It was a mere backyard pool toy — an inflatable rubber raft. But to these boys it was what they had been hoping for — what they had been needing — it was a fishing boat! Now they could “get out amongst them” — out in the pond where the really big ones lurk.

Only one more thing was needed. What could they use for an anchor? After all, every boat needs an anchor! Finally they had the solution — an empty plastic milk jug. Fill it with water to make it heavy, and tie on a rope.

But, wait! Something is wrong. The anchor won't sink! A valuable lesson in physics is learned the hard way. The water in the jug weighs no more than the water outside the jug. You can't make an anchor that way! And, who says that fishing isn't educational?

There's a spiritual lesson to be learned here, too. (You knew I was coming to that, didn't you?) Christians are to be a strong influence in the world. Jesus used the analogies of “salt” and “light” in His Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5:13-16). But we can't be that kind of preserving and enlightening influence on others if we are not different than they are. If we talk, dress, and act like people of the world, we won't be able to change them. If we do what they do, go the evil places that they go, and engage in their evil practices, we can't teach them. Paul urged us to “*be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed ...*” (Rom. 12:2).

Learn the lesson! A boat anchor made out of water won't sink, and a Christian who is like the world won't win others to Christ.

✍ Greg Gwin

## *Who Will Mourn At YOUR Funeral?*

You have probably attended funerals when there was not a single additional seat available and people were standing in the doors and hallways in order to see and hear. But you also may have been at a funeral where only a handful of people were in attendance. Why the difference? The obvious answer is that some people have lived in such a way to gain respect, love, and admiration, while others have lived a life that produced very little of the same.

We all have an appointment with death (Hebrews 9:27). That being the case — and while not wanting to be too morbid — we simply ask: Who will mourn when YOU die?

**FAMILY?** Will your mate, your children, your siblings, and other relatives be grief stricken at your death? This is typically true, because of the “natural affection” of relatives. But some have lived in such a way as to alienate even their own relatives. What a sad situation! Are you working to maintain strong family ties?

**FRIENDS?** In order to have friends, one must “show himself friendly” (Proverbs 18:24). Unfortunately, some never do this. Therefore it is not surprising when there are no friends to mourn at their passing. On the other hand, it is obvious when one dies who has developed close friendships with many people. What about you?

**BRETHREN?** One of the closest relationships that anyone can know is the bond between brethren in Christ. When a faithful brother or sister dies, it is common to see large crowds assemble at their funeral. But too many people have never submitted to the Lord, never experienced the blessing of being in the family of God, and therefore have no brethren who might grieve at their funeral. How sad!

How we live now will determine how things will be when we die: not just at our funeral, but throughout eternity. Think!

✍ Greg Gwin



## *“Once Saved, Always Saved”*

This doctrine is also known as “The Impossibility of Apostasy” or “The Perseverance of the Saints.” The Westminster Confession puts it this way: “They whom God hath accepted in His beloved,

effectually called and sanctified by His Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of Grace; but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved.” The doctrine is NOT supported by what is taught in God’s Word. Note:

1) *“Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.”* (Galatians 5:4) This verse shows that some who were in God’s grace could fall from His grace. How can this Scripture be harmonized with the statement above?

2) *“Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end.”* (Hebrews 3:12-14) This passage is addressed to “brethren,” and they are warned about the possibility of “departing from the living God” and about being “hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.” Their salvation was conditional upon holding “the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end.”

3) *“For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.”* (2 Peter 2:20-22) Observe those who are described in this text – people who had “escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord.” These people were saved, but they could be “entangled” again and “overcome.” And, that latter state would be worse than before they had ever known the Lord. Clearly, they could be lost after having been saved.

More Bible verses are available on this subject, but just these three passages make it clear that “once saved, always saved” is not taught in God’s Word. ✍️ Greg Gwin

## **“One Thing I Know”**

I have always appreciated the response of the man in John 9 when the Jews tried to pressure him into condemning Jesus as a sinner. *“He therefore answered, Whether he is a sinner, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see”* (John 9:25). I wish some of my brethren would have the same attitude this man had. There is an attitude manifested by many that says, “if you don’t know everything you can’t be sure about anything.”

We should be humble and recognize we can be wrong. This is why we need to constantly study the word and examine the things we believe and practice in the light thereof. However, I do not believe this humility demands that we accept anything or everything that comes along and that we accept the position that we just can’t be sure or definite about anything.

I may not know everything but there are some things I know are true and I am not ready to leave or compromise these truths simply because there are other things I do not know. We must continue to *“contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints”* (Jude 3). Paul said, *“I am not ashamed; for I know him whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to guard that which I have committed unto him against that day.”* (2 Timothy 1:12)

✍️ James Hahn

**Belleville church of Christ**  
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<b>Schedule of Services</b>	<b>Elders</b>
Sun. Bible Study. . . . . 9:30 a.m.	Charles Carpenter. . . (317) 839-3873
Sun. Morning Worship. . . . 10:30 a.m.	James Hahn. . . . . (317) 745-1507
Sun. Evening Worship. . . . . 5:00 p.m.	
Wed. Bible Study. . . . . 7:00 p.m.	
<b>Evangelist</b>	<b>Deacons</b>
James Hahn. . . . . (317) 745-1507	Leon Nevins . . . . . (317) 272-2966
	Don Perry. . . . . (765) 676-5825
	Alvin Stanley. . . . . (317) 831-3514