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It's so very easy to say, "Jesus is our Lord and Savior. He has died for our sins and deserves our worship and service." But do we remember our commitment to Him when no one is around to watch how we live? Do we remember it when we are tired and there are other things begging for our attention?

Jer. 3:10, "...Judah did not return to me with all her heart, but only in pretense," declares the LORD." It wasn't real! It was only pretend!

We may say the right things about God when it's in our best interest to do so but what about our true relationship with the Lord? Can we come before Him without shame? Looking good in the eyes of others is not enough.

Let us strive to serve God from the heart. **1 Tim. 1:5**, "But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith"

— Shane Williams

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Lilbourn Church of Christ
P.O. Box 270
Lilbourn, MO 63862

Address Service Requested



Times of Assembly:

Sunday:

Bible Class	9:45am
Morning Worship	10:45am
Evening Worship	5:30pm

Wednesday:

Bible Class	7:30pm
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Website:

www.geocities.com/heartland/cabin/8851/

Preacher and Editor:

Shane Williams

Office: 573-688-2234

Home: 573-748-5204

shanewms@sheltonbbs.com

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The Lilbourn Light



"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" -Psalm 119:105



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Just Pretending

You've probably heard the story about the driver who put a note under the windshield wiper of a parked car. The note read, "I have just smashed into your car. The people who saw the accident are watching me. They think I'm writing down my name and address but I'm not."

As deceptive as that story is, it isn't nearly as bad as what we see in the book of Jeremiah. In Jeremiah 3, the people of Judah were described as willing to call God their Father and friend while still doing all the evil they could (vs. 4-5).

Jer. 3:4-5, "Have you not just called to me: 'My Father, my friend from my youth, 5 will you always be angry?'"

Will your wrath continue forever? This is how you talk, but you do all the evil you can."

These people needed so desperately to return to the Lord. Yet, they only pretended to do so; their hearts were far from Him.

Putting on a false front is a very old practice but it certainly hasn't gone out of fashion. I can't think of a greater problem to be concerned with than to see people not serving the Lord from the heart. If we don't follow Him from our heart, it is just pretending. If we don't serve and worship Him from the heart, we are just wasting our time.

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The Sifting of Satan

In Jesus' day, women sifted wheat by grasping a sieve in both hands and shaking it forcefully from side to side. Then they would move the sieve in a seesaw motion while blowing over the wheat to remove the chaff. It was a process that took much work.

This is the image the Lord used to warn His disciples of what they would face when He went to the cross. They would be like the wheat, and the sifter would be their great enemy Satan.

Jesus singled out Peter: **Luke 22:31**, "*Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat.*"

He went on to tell him, "*I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail*" (**Luke 22:32**). Peter went on to deny the Lord just as Jesus said he would but wasn't Peter's denials (vs. 54-62) a failure of his faith? I don't believe it was so much a failure of his faith or His love for Jesus but rather the failure of his hope. Peter was ready to fight! He got out his sword when the mob came and cut off Malchus' ear! Yet, when Jesus actually allowed the mob to take Him (with no resistance), Peter's hope of protecting the Lord

(going to prison and/or dying for the Lord) was gone. He lost his courage also and we soon see him following from a distance. This was not at all what he expected!

Perhaps hardship or circumstances has caused us to "deny" the Lord, in one way or another. Like Peter, we still love Jesus, but oh, how disgraceful our actions!

All of Satan's power and devices are no match for the power of Jesus.

All is not lost. The Lord told Peter, "*When you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren*" (vs. 32). Those words meant forgiveness, restoration, and a new opportunity for service; as we go on to see after the resurrection.

The sifting of Satan could not thwart Jesus' prayers. That is true for us as well as for Peter. All of Satan's power and devices are no match for the power of Jesus.

Rom 8:32-34, "*He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things? 33 Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; 34 who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.*"

With Jesus as our Savior, we are able to overcome the power of Satan. He intercedes (entreats, pleads) for us! Put your faith and confidence in the Lord!

— Shane Williams

East to West

How far is the east from the west? Where does the east end and the west begin? The state of Iowa once had for its slogan: "*Where the west begins and the tall corn grows.*" The last part of the slogan is true; the first is questionable at best. No one knows where the west begins or where it ends. It's all a matter of where we are.

No one knows where the west begins or where it ends.

If I started in Missouri and wanted to travel as far west as possible, how far would I have to go? When I reach San Francisco, Hawaii is still west. After that China is still west and from there Europe is west. West of there and I'm back in the US, soon to come home to Missouri.

How far west must I go to reach the east? It is beyond measure!

Psalm 103:10-13, "*He has not dealt with us according to our sins, Nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. 11 For as high as the heavens are above the earth, So great is His lovingkindness toward those who fear Him. 12 As far as the*

east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us. 13 Just as a father has compassion on his children, So the LORD has compassion on those who fear Him."

If you are a Christian, you should rejoice that your sins are beyond the reach of man or the devil. Jesus died on the cross for our sins and rose from the grave. In Christ, God removed our transgressions "*as far as the east is from the west*" (Ps. 103:12). Our sins are forgiven and forgotten forever.

Hebrews 10:17, "*Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.*"

— Shane Williams

God's Plan for Saving Man

- ⇒ **Hear** the Gospel (Romans 10:17)
- ⇒ **Believe** the Gospel (Hebrews 11:6; John 20:31)
- ⇒ **Repent** of Past Sins (Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30)
- ⇒ **Confess Faith** in Christ (Romans 10:10; Matthew 10:32)
- ⇒ **Be Baptized** in water (Acts 2:38; Mk. 16:16; Gal. 3:27; I Pet. 3:21)
- ⇒ **Be Faithful** until/ unto Death (Rev. 2:10)