

August 02, 2019

Warm hellos to you dear brethren, and spiritual family here on the Coast of the Gulf of Mexico, and scattered children of God.

My wife and I pray and hope this finds you all doing well, and that again your week has been blessed!

The Void that Sin Produces

Have you ever just felt “blah”, no real reason, just “blah”...but then you start to think about it, meditate, muse, ponder and pray...and then it strikes you and you have an “ah-hah!” moment?

If you are like me, on occasion you may have this emptiness or void for a few moments, maybe a few minutes, perhaps a day or longer, and that’s not usually a good place to be for any length of time.

That feeling “blah” or that void or emptiness is a not a long-term solution for any of us. This natural created world won’t put up with it. More and more people live day to day with an emptiness, void, or vacuum in their lives. Sadly, some even consider it normal. And many spend thousands of dollars each year to figure out just how to stop being “empty or void” and living a life that seems empty.

Many buy gifts, take endless vacations, constantly change or make improvements on where they live, change jobs, change spouses...the list goes on.

As I drove down by the Bay this morning here in lower Alabama with the windows down the air felt heavy. And you know, the air around you isn’t empty. It’s by design very full of molecules of oxygen, hydrogen, nitrogen and all sorts of atoms invisible to our eyes, each one bouncing off each other, mixing, spreading, and reacting. Nature doesn’t mind this process. God created things this way for a purpose. They did not just “evolve”.

What nature detests, or as you’ve heard “abhors” though is a vacuum. True emptiness. That “void” of something.

There is an interesting verse in Genesis 1:2 that states *“And the earth was (became) without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters”*. God had to change that void or emptiness to something that was good.

As a youth I thoroughly enjoyed science class. Especially earth science. God’s designed this universe to maintain equal pressure, and a vacuum or void upsets that balance by creating a

pocket of low pressure. That is where most of our weather comes from on this planet. Left to its own devices, the universe will fill a vacuum with pieces of itself until pressure has returned to normal.

Siphon hoses, vacuum cleaners, and a ceiling fan like the one in my office take advantage of that scientific principle by generating mostly empty spaces that air feels compelled to then fill in or occupy.

Similarly a small thermos that I often used when carrying my lunch with me years ago, used a sealed vacuum to keep hot things hot and cold things cold, because it turned out there's no insulator quite like a that area around the liquid that's in a vacuum.

What is interesting is that the only reason our entire atmosphere hasn't been sucked into the vacuum of space is because the incredible God designed gravitational pull of this earth to keep things in balance. Without it, our planet might look very similar to the several barren, inhabitable planets in our solar system. Fascinating stuff for sure!

And here's a point to consider. There's a worse kind of vacuum, void, or emptiness and that's the kind you and I can create all too easily within our very hearts and minds.

I'm reminded of a very familiar Biblical story often written about where after casting a demon out of a man who could not speak, Christ gave this warning:

When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he says, "I will return to my house from which I came." And when he comes, he finds it swept and put in order. Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first.
(Luke 11:24-26)

Although it's invisible to us, the spirit realm is indeed a very real place. Just like the radio and broadcast waves we can't see, they are still there, and function well. The spiritual world is the same. I've experienced it over the years in the good and the bad.

God's Word gives us insight into how that spiritual world works, and Christ's warning in Luke chapter eleven is one of those eye openers or "ah-ha!" that I mentioned at the beginning of this letter.

Unclean spirits or demons can on occasion take up residence within a person. To demons, a human being is like a house or a dwelling place in which to prop their feet up and call home. But the interesting thing about this insight into the spirit world is what happens when they're cast out.

Jesus explained that at times an exorcised demon will try to return to the "home" from which he was evicted. In the example He gave, a demon returns to find his home "swept and in order"—clean, yet empty if you will.

When we find a spiritual vacuum or void, or it is empty, it's just waiting to be filled by the first thing that happens to be in the vicinity and we must be vigilant. In this recorded example, that's the demon and seven of his comrades, and it tells us "...and the last state of that man is worse than the first." It's why we must be ever so careful to choose activities that never empty our minds.

Yes, it's sobering stuff, if you think about it. But a spiritual vacuum or void influences far more than just demonic activity—it has a very real impact on your and my life in general.

It's why so many spend hours with social media, music and entertainment...it seems that emptiness has to be filled with something...

God gives us options of how to fill that void, but do we listen?

Let's dig deeper. Have you ever found yourself entangled in or glued to a sin? And in this process you feel empty, void, and or all alone? And it just gets worse as time goes on?

Struggling over and over with something you want desperately to be rid of, but one that keeps sneaking its way back into your life? Sometimes it does not even sneak, and it just boldly jumps in.

If you are like me, some things we struggle with for a lifetime...decades after being baptized, they just never seem to be overcome. Over the years I've counseled with many who've said, "I just feel so empty, and I can't seem to overcome this sin!" and "What is it I am missing?"

Have you or I ever considered or asked why?

There's nothing more discouraging or frustrating than finding yourself once again held captive by an ugly part of your life that you were sure you'd repented of, and left in the past. We all

face this, it's nothing unique to just us today. Our ancestors recorded in God's Word give us ample examples to study and learn from.

I'm reminded as I prepare for this Sabbath, (a day for us set apart to reflect on and look even more to Him), that you and I have the most incredible calling in the world from God. How can we ever become the people God called us to be if we can't stop stumbling over the sins of our past that are still with us? So many questions come to mind. Why can't I overcome? If these sins just never seem to go away? Is it even possible? How are the two related, sin and feeling empty? Must we continue to feel empty, void, or helpless in this trek in Life called Christianity?

Oh I understand, overcoming sin is hard. It's a daily battle. But it's what you and I as Christians are called to do. But it's absolutely necessary.

And, more than that, the good news is that it's possible.

It's a painful or arduous battle most choose not to fight, and they just give in.

Over the years, many have walked away from this calling, and simply gone back to how things were before. They have given up on God, at least for the time being. But He never gives up on us.

But is overcoming im-possible? Absolutely not. Philippians 4:13 tells us *"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me"*.

With the grace of God, repentance and the forgiveness of Jesus Christ, and Him living in us, coupled with our own dogged determination to see this through, and not give up, (enduring to the end if you will) we can overcome sin and leave it behind, for good. At its core it involves allowing Christ's mind in us, (Phil 2:5) through His Word, and filling our emptiness or void with Him. We simply can't remain empty or void.

Next time, we'll examine some very real options that God gives us to succeed, overcome, and fill that void, vacuum or emptiness that the sin produces...and we'll examine more closely how sin does that.

...as I close this letter, as I do every Friday evening...as we enter His Sabbath...reflect on this with me, will you?

And again, may God continue to richly bless you. Our prayers and thoughts are with you daily! Please do pray for us as well.

-*Scott Hoefker* (Pastor and wife (Gayle) The Living God Ministries Gulf Coast)

The schedule for this week's **Sabbath** is:

August 2nd / Friday: Gifts for the Lord/ Praises/Gifts and Prayers to welcome God's Sabbath
7:00 pm (via Teleconference live connect with Stephen Glover and Friends.)

August 3rd / Saturday: Spirit and Truth Worship Services 10:15 am, with local services held in Montgomery *and* Spanish Fort. Whit Moorer will deliver the message from Montgomery. (All others are welcomed and encouraged to connect live to Worship Services via our normal phone conference). There will be a potluck meal in Spanish Fort shortly after the morning Worship Service. All are welcomed to stay and enjoy.

August 3rd / Saturday: Sabbath Fellowship Study (Interactive Bible Discussion) **4:00 pm** from Spanish Fort with Scott Hoefker (connecting live with all others via telephone conference).

Next Sabbath's Schedule for TLGM Gulf Coast:

August 9th / Friday: Gifts for the Lord/ Praises/Gifts and Prayers to welcome God's Sabbath
7:00 pm (via Teleconference live connect) with Stephen Glover and friends.

August 10th / Saturday: Spirit and Truth Worship Services 10:15 am, with local services held in Montgomery with the message by Scott Hoefker. There will be no local Sabbath services in Spanish Fort. (All are welcome and encouraged to connect live to Worship Services via our normal phone conference).

August 10th / Saturday: Sabbath Fellowship (interactive Bible Discussion) 4:00 pm *from* Montgomery with Stephen Glover (connect live to all others via telephone conference).

Telephone Ministry (English): Call **1-712-770-4700**; then, when asked, enter Code **112165 #** to join.

(Note: All callers are muted and must press ***6** to comment and ***6** to resume mute.)

All times are listed in Central Standard Time zone.

Our Daily Bread Recordings

Sunday through Saturday / Our Daily Bread [listen anytime 24/7 to a recorded 15 minute message] Call 1-712-770-4709 (note this call in number is different and ends in "9"), then when asked, enter code 112165# [reference code numbers are on "Spiritual Fellowship Opportunities" on this website <http://www.tlministriesgc.org> or at "Resources/Archives" on <http://www.haggai114.net>]

Daily Fellowship Opportunities

Sunday – Friday / **Morning Sacrifice** (Prayers & Scripture Reading) at 6:00 a.m.

Sundays / **History & Background of the Gospels** (Interactive) at 6:30 p.m. [Scott &

Friends]

Mondays / Africa Discipleship at 7:00 a.m. [Glovers & Moses]

Almond Branch Fellowship at 6:30 p.m. (Interactive) (Stephen & Friends)

Tuesdays / **Haggai Fellowship** (Interactive) at 6:30 p.m. (Interactive) [Stephen & Friends]

Wednesdays / Africa Discipleship at 7:00 a.m. [Glovers & Moses]

1st & 3rd Wednesday / **Sons of God Fellowship** (Young men training) at 6:30 p.m. [Stephen & Friends]

2nd & 4th Wednesday / **Lydian's Fellowship** (Ladies) at 6:30 p.m. [Esther/Gayle & Friends]

Thursdays / **Mt. Carmel Fellowship** (Interactive) at 6:30 p.m. [Hoefkers & Friends]

Scott Hoefker, Pastor

The Living God Ministries Gulf Coast

(Ministerio del Dios Viviente Costa del Golfo de México)

tshoefker@tlgministriesgc.org

www.tlgministriesgc.org

251-930-1797 Office /402-250-2389 Cell

Stephen Glover, Pastor

The Living God Ministries Alabama

faith_book.net@reagan.com

<http://haggai114.net/>

334-467-2677 Cell