

View

Making Bricks of Mud

BY ROBERT F. TURNER, PLAIN TALK, FEBRUARY, 1981

Paul was set upon by a mob, then dragged from their hands by police. Falsely charged, he spent ca. 2 years in Jewish prisons, and was then sent to Rome to appear before Caesar. His traveling days ended, and threatened with death by savage beasts (2 Tim. 4: 17), we could understand his being depressed and feeling "all is lost." Instead, he wrote to the Philippians, "the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel" (1:12-21). He could write, "I rejoice!"

Discounting his personal discomforts, he saw the good side of the bad — saw victory in defeat. I know his selflessness, his trust in the Lord, is the key. "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." Paul had to learn this attitude; but I am impressed that he learned it so well it seems to have become a part of him. He "learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content" (4:11); and this kind of thinking spawned hope instead of despair. Throw mud at Paul and he made bricks of it, and built a house. Send him lemons, and he would enjoy the lemonade, and thank you for them. It is hard to defeat a person with such an attitude as that.

We do not refer to an artificial Pollyannaish attitude, out of touch with reality. Paul sought relief from his "thorn in the flesh" (2 Cor. 12:8) but when this was denied him he could "glory in my infirmities" making the most of them in defending his apostleship (vs. 7-11). He did not enjoy being forsaken by his brethren any more than do we, but he could "pray God that it may not be laid to their charge" (2 Tim. 4:16-17). He was confident that the Lord would save him.

Nor is this simply the SELF reliance, "indomitable ego" that is so highly recommended by psychotherapists. Human philosophies "plug in" to no higher source than man himself, and when society fails (as it does repeatedly) the individual despairs sometimes ends it all in suicide. But the "look up" attitude of a true believer in God removes fear of the future, his soul is anchored (Heb. 6: 18-20), and he "shall not be moved." As one rancher friend of mine put it: "Things are going to pick up!"

The church of Christ

Meeting at 900 E. Natoma
PO Box 492
Folsom, CA 95630
916/608-4866

Elders

Forrest Brown: 530/295-9230
Randy Clark: 916/939-5066
Rich Ladd: 916/774-9048
David Posey: 530/676-9514
Dennis Reagan: 916/797-5539

Deacons

Brent Agee: 916/786-0436
Bryan Byrd: 916/351-9320
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Barrett Cain: 916/351-0774
Michael Caisse: 530/672-2902
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Dane Scott: 916/631-7221
Russ Tarrant: 530/672-1748
Steve Thompson: 916/983-4170
Jeff Warshaw: 916/933-9399

Evangelist/Editor

David Posey: 530/676-9514
dpaulposey@mac.com

Services

Sunday Morning Assembly
9:30 AM

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7:30 PM

Classes for all ages.
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From Robert Turner's "Stuff about Things"

FEBRUARY, 1981 PLAIN TALK

One of our elders, bro. Stephenson, began a lesson on "How To Be Lost" by telling an experience of childhood. He said that when he took the family ". 22" and was about to venture into the "big woods" on his first squirrel hunt, an old man told him: "(1) Don't leave the creek bottom; (2) Don't cross any fences; and (3) Get home before dark." Friend, that's good advice, for lots of things.

I began roaming the woods at an early age, and can remember how vast and "unknown" a large stand of timber looks to a small boy, bravely (?) holding his rifle before him, and pushing through that first fringe of blackberry vines and sumac. The desire to move quietly forces you into dim trails through the leaves; the way you want to go is often blocked by downed timber or brush; and the barking of a distant squirrel can excite and lead you on without taking careful note of directions. Yes, it is easy for a boy to get lost.

"Get home before dark" doesn't need explanation; and not many young hunters want

to spend the night in the woods anyway. But "don't cross any fences" is also important. Staying within the fence meant you knew whose farm or ranch you were on, and could walk the fence line back to the point of your entry. When "turned around" — we big hunters always knew where we were, we just didn't know where the gate was — I have walked through briar patches rather than lose sight of the fence.

And "don't leave the creek bottom," meant you could keep your general directions straight by the way the water ran. In my day creek water was also good for drinking. There is no telling how many little boys have come safely home from the big woods because they stayed within defined boundaries and kept their directions; or have been lost, sometimes in death, because they left the creek bottom and crossed the fence.

Must we spell it out for you? The "big woods" of life is an awesome place, but it must be entered and properly used to fulfill our purpose. Our heavenly Father has provided the boundaries and direction, and within them we can overcome life's problems and through grace come safely home.

Bible Preaching March 29th to April 3rd 2009

Bob Owen

Tampa, Florida

Brother Owen will be presenting an excellent series of lessons from Hebrews 2:1-4. He will help us focus on being steadfast in our faith, covering topics such as the danger of falling away, how God punishes sin and the great salvation we enjoy in Christ. Brother Owen is a gifted speaker with years of experience to share. Make plans to be here for each meeting.

**Sunday 9:30 AM and 5 PM
Monday through Friday at 7:30 PM**

Folsom Point church of Christ
900 E. Natoma
Folsom, California 95630
Call (916) 608-4866 or David Posey at (530) 676-9514