



FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

“The Last Year of the Life of Christ, Part 54”

July 26th, 2009

Pastor Darryl R. Curtis

Family Life Baptist Church

909 West Saginaw Street

Lansing, Michigan 48915

Phone: (517) 393-9399

Email: info@familylifebc.com

Website: <http://www.familylifebc.com>

Informed. Insightful. Intelligent.



The Last Year of the Life of Christ, Part 54

John 13:12-17

12 So when [Jesus] had washed their feet, taken His garments, and sat down again, He said to them, **“Do you know what I have done to you?**

13 **You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am.**

14 **If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet.**

15 **For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.**

16 **Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him.**

17 **If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.**

Thank you very much for coming to hear the message for today. Before we begin our next lesson, let us reiterate our reason for attending Church.

We attend Church to obtain the mind of Christ, meaning, to have the Bible illuminated in our minds so that we can clearly understand the principles that Jesus taught and base our daily personal decisions on those principles.

We come to Church because we want to be obedient to the Bible, which is the doctrine of Jesus Christ, in an informed, insightful and intelligent manner.

We have completed our review of the last year of the public ministry of Jesus Christ, the purpose of which was to prepare the stage upon which Jesus was to make His ultimate sacrifice, giving His life on the Cross. Jesus is to sacrifice Himself during the Passover, which is the commemoration of the Jewish Exodus from Egypt, and which is described in **Exodus 12:1-14**:

1 **Now the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying,**

3 **Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: ‘On the tenth of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household.**

5 **Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats.**

6 **Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight.**

7 **And they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it.**

11 **And thus you shall eat it: with a belt on your waist, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. So you shall eat it in haste. It is the LORD’s Passover.**

12 **‘For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the**



gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD.

13 Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.

14 'So this day shall be to you a memorial; and you shall keep it as a feast to the LORD throughout your generations. You shall keep it as a feast by an everlasting ordinance.

The Passover sacrifice, as described in **Exodus 12:5**, was to be a male lamb less than one year old that was without blemish. The lamb without blemish denotes the purity, symbolizing sinlessness, required in a sacrifice. God is teaching the Israelites that their impurities can only be cleansed by something pure, just as we need a clean washcloth to cleanse ourselves when we take a bath. As it is ineffective to bathe with a dirty washcloth, it is just as ineffective to try to cleanse our sins with a dirty, or impure, sacrifice.

In **Exodus 12:12**, God does not say that He is going to strike all of the firstborn Egyptians, but that He is going to strike all of the firstborn in the land of Egypt. The phrase, "in the land of Egypt" is a geographical designation rather than an ethnic one.

The Israelites are in the land of Egypt along with the Egyptians, and it is important for us to realize that both the Israelites and the Egyptians are equally deserving of being stricken by God. The events in the history of the Nation of Israel show us that the Israelites were no better morally than were the Egyptians. The Egyptians sinned and worshipped idols, but the Israelites sinned and worshipped idols as well.

God is not saving the Israelites because of any goodness that the Israelites possess, rather, God is saving the Israelites because, in His mercy, He has chosen the Nation of Israel to be His people. God has chosen to love Israel despite their sinfulness, just as we choose to love our babies despite the fact that they keep us from sleep, they don't bring any income into the house and they defecate in their diapers creating messes that we have to clean up.

The key to understanding the concept of sacrifice is the recognition that you and I, like the Egyptians and the Israelites, create messes for God to clean up by our sin, and as **Romans 6:23** tells us, we deserve death, because the wages of sin is death.

Now, the reason that Christianity and the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for our sins makes no sense to many unsaved people is that they are under the preconceived misconception that God is going to judge everyone's sins at the judgment. They understand that **Revelation 20:12** says:

12 And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books.



Since everyone that has ever lived or died is a sinner, this judgment is going to result in the eternal damnation of everyone judged. At this judgment, both the fellow that murdered the thirty two students at Virginia Tech in 2007 and the eighteen year old girl that became pregnant out of wedlock and had an abortion so that her college plans would not be interrupted will both be judged and condemned as murderers. It's true that shooting up the college was illegal and resulted in the death of thirty-two young adults in the prime of their lives, while the abortion was not illegal and only resulted in the death of one fetus, someone of whom the girl may have been convinced was not even actually a human being. But these facts will not make a difference to God, our judge.

The unsaved person cannot see how it is fair for God to condemn the girl to the same punishment to which He condemns the Virginia Tech killer, but the fact that the unsaved person can't see it does not negate the fact that the Bible says that it will happen. Since the unsaved person disagrees with God's conclusion, he may further come to the conclusion that the God that we Christians espouse is unjust.

To further add to the perceived injustice of God, the unsaved person may have personal moral standards that are as good or better than those of many Christians. Sinners often have better moral track records than Christians. In fact, the only person that Jesus actually told that they absolutely would be in heaven with Him had almost no moral standards at all, as he was the murdering thief that hung on the cross next to Jesus. The thief confessed his crime during the exchange that he had on the cross with his partner in, as **Luke 23:39-41** records:
**39 Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed [Jesus], saying, "If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us."
40 But the other [criminal], answering, rebuked him, saying, "Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation?
41 And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong."**

Then, in **Luke 23:42**:

42 [The criminal] said to Jesus, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom."

Justice demanded that Jesus condemn this murdering thief even as did the Roman authority that was executing him, but in **Luke 23:43**:

43 Jesus said to [the criminal], "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."

How is it possible that God can send anyone to hell if He does not send this murdering thief there? Yes, the thief confessed that Jesus Christ as Lord, but he was hanging on the cross when he did so. The thief did not have to live a good Christian life for even one day. He did not even have to suffer the full anguish of the cross because, less than four hours later, the Roman soldiers broke his legs so that he would die more speedily and could be taken down from



cross before sundown to allow the Jews to begin their Passover celebration on time.

God will forgive a murdering thief as he is being executed and allow him into heaven while sending a young girl having had a perfectly legal abortion to hell?

To the unsaved mind, a God that would allow this to happen is terribly unjust. Many Christians don't think too much of this type of justice either, so they try to rationalize that which the Bible says so that people that are "good", meaning that they are not perfect but that they generally follow the moral law of God as well as do most people, can be included in the number going to heaven whether or not they have actually accepted the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

However, the Apostle Paul tells us, through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, in **Galatians 3:11**:

11 But that no one is justified by [their observation of] the law in the sight of God is evident, for "the just shall live by faith."

The fact of the matter is that the Law of God puts a curse on all of us, whether we are a murdering thief or not. From Adam down to the last person born today, none of us have avoided sin by completely following the Law of God, so all of us are cursed, or condemned, by the law. When you are in court being tried because a police officer has cited you for travelling faster than the speed limit, the number of years that you have driven without a citation is not a factor in the mind of the judge. Your observation of the law does not justify you, because, on the day that the officer was recording your speed, you were breaking the law. Twenty years of a clean driving record does not count when the radar gun clocks you at fifteen over; in fact, your driving record is inadmissible as a defense.

If we go back to the girl that had the abortion, suppose she marries, bears ten children and raises them all to be productive adults. The fact remains that she murdered her first child. The ten do not make up for the one. We might feel that she is rehabilitated, but feelings don't count in the judgment; the objective fact is that, despite her rehabilitation, her first child is still just as dead. The Apostle Paul tells us that regardless of how much she observes God's law, her observation of God's Law does not make up for or justify her sin. She is not justified by her obedience; but rather, she is cursed by her disobedience.

However, the Apostle Paul goes on to tell us, in **Galatians 3:13-14**, that:

13 Christ has redeemed us from the Curse of [God's] law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"), 14 that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

The only way to avoid the condemnation of the Curse of God's Law is through faith in Jesus Christ. The blood of the sacrificial Passover lamb on the doorpost saved the firstborn of Israel from the death that they deserved and that the Egyptians both deserved and received, and we require a sacrifice, as did the



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Israelites, to save us from the penalty of death, meaning the eternal damnation that we deserve for breaking God's law.

God the Father did not instruct us to kill a Passover lamb. Rather, God the Son, Jesus Christ, mercifully gave Himself for us as a Passover Lamb, a perfect sacrifice for sin, pure and without blemish, and Jesus Christ has written the names of those of us that have accepted His sacrifice in His Book of Life. God, the Holy Spirit has put the Blood of the Passover Lamb on the doorposts, not of our houses, but of our hearts, so that when the Final Judgment comes, the Judge of All Things will pass over us, even as the Death Angel passed over the Israelites. Those that do not have the Blood of Jesus Christ on their hearts will receive the fate of the Egyptians, as **Revelation 20:15** says:

15 And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

We are not saved by our own goodness, that is, by how well we have observed the law in comparison with our peers, but we are saved by the application of the Blood of the Lamb, Jesus Christ, on our hearts. The lambs that the Israelites killed were symbolic sacrifices for their sins, but Jesus Christ is the actual sacrifice for sin. Jesus Christ died of orthostatic collapse after a severe, bloody beating with whips, followed by an arduous trek up a high hill carrying an eighty to one hundred ten pound wooden beam tied to his extended arms across His shoulders. When Jesus reached the top of the hill, He was stripped naked, pierced through the wrists with eight inch Roman roofing nails and fastened to the wooden beam. The beam was then lifted to a height of nearly ten feet, and placed in the slot in a vertical post embedded into the ground. At this point, Jesus' ankles were pierced by similar nails as were His wrists and He was fastened to the vertical post. He was left hanging and bleeding until His blood volume decreased to the point that His heart could no longer pump blood through His body, at which point, He hung His Head in the locks on His shoulder, and He died. He died a public and horrifically painful death in order to pay the penalty that we owe for the sins that we have committed.

Once there was absolutely no question that Jesus Christ was dead, He was then taken down from the Cross and buried in a borrowed tomb. The old preacher said that Jesus Christ borrowed a tomb because He only planned to use it for just a few days, as three days later, Jesus Christ rose physically from the dead to inform us as to the objective way that we can have our sins forgiven. Jesus Christ died because the judgment about which we read in **Revelation 20** is actually going to happen. Jesus Christ returned to life from the dead to verify to His disciples and us that the afterlife exists, and that these things are going to happen, and that those that are judged by the Judge of All Things on that day will have the lake of fire as their final destination. But because of our trust in Jesus Christ as the sacrifice for our sins, His Blood is applied to the doorposts of our hearts by the ministry of the Holy Spirit, and He has written our



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names in His, the Lamb's Book of Life as the qualification that we need to avoid condemnation and to enter Heaven, rather than being cast in the Lake of Fire as a consequence of our sins, as **Revelation 21:27** tells us:

27 But there shall by no means enter [Heaven] anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

John 3:16-17 tells us:

16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, shed His Blood on the Cross of Calvary because He loves us. We are not saved because of our own merit but rather, in spite of our lack of merit, simply because God loves us. It is my impression that human beings are born helpless because God is giving us, as parents, the opportunity to experience the type of love that He has for us. A newborn baby actually has no redeeming social value, and young children have little more. Adolescents may actually have less. Children are a problem for parents from the time that they are born until they leave the house and get married. I can remember being awakened by my wife before day in the morning because the baby was crying. She woke me up to go get her the baby so that she could nurse him without getting out of our nice, warm bed. Many of you have been in the same situation. Ask yourself, "Objectively, what did I get out of it?" The logical answer is, nothing. Now ask yourself, "Then why did I do it?" The emotional, not logical, answer is "Because I love my wife and my child."

Well, I can understand your love for your wife because she is your life partner and your sex partner, but what is the point of loving the baby? The fact of the matter is that there is no point. In terms of financial benefit, I have actually done my father no earthly good. He saved his money and managed it well, and even now, he does not need any financial contributions from me. As a matter of fact, he periodically contributes to our church and has given me more money in the last year than I have given him. His financial contribution from me has been negative, and I have actually done him no earthly financial good. But love is not a matter of earthly goods or dollars and cents.

Love is God's decision to act spontaneously and favorably toward us, though we have no merit of our own.

The justice of God required Jesus to give His earthly life on the Cross of Calvary in order for us to be saved. It did not require Jesus to spend the year that we have discussed in the previous fifty-three lessons in our series in public ministry with His disciples. But Jesus spent that year ministering to and with the disciples so that He could have the firsthand experience of developing a love relationship with those eleven men, even as we develop a love relationship with



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our children. Jesus was just as much of a parent to those men as we are to our children. The ministry of Jesus Christ changed the love of God for mankind from an abstract, theoretical phenomenon, to a concrete, fervent affection between Jesus Christ and the eleven men that he tutored, nurtured and with whom He eventually developed a loving, personal relationship. **John 13:1** tells us:

1 Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.

God loved the world, and Jesus Christ personified that love by developing a firsthand love relationship with those men with whom He walked. Human beings cannot develop love without physical proximity, so Jesus ate and drank with His disciples virtually every day of this last year of His ministry. But although Jesus developed love for His disciples, all of Jesus' disciples did not develop love for Him. One of His disciples did not return Jesus' love, but rather, facilitated God's plan for Jesus' sacrifice. From Johnston M. Cheney's harmony of the Gospels, "Jesus Christ, The Greatest Life" **Matthew 26:1-5, 14-16, Mark 14:1-2, 10-11** and **Luke 22:2-6** reads:

The Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread were two days away. When Jesus was finished saying these things, He told His disciples, "You know the Passover is coming in two days, and then the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified."

At that time the chief priests and the teachers of the law and the elders of the people assembled in the palace of the high priest, Caiaphas, in order to decide how to arrest Jesus secretly and kill Him. They said, "We can't do it during the feast, or the people will cause an uproar." They said this because they were afraid of the people.

Jesus' great teaching and His miracles had engendered such admiration from the Jewish pilgrims that had come to the Passover that no one could even argue with Jesus in the presence of the multitude, much less arrest Him. Jesus and the Jewish pilgrims were going to be in Jerusalem for the Passover, and those that wanted to arrest and execute Jesus assumed that both Jesus and the multitude would be leaving Jerusalem at the end of the feast. Thus, they would have no chance to arrest Jesus once the feast was over. So you can understand their delight when Judas approached them. **Matthew 26:1-5, 14-16, Mark 14:1-2, 10-11** and **Luke 22:2-6** continues:

Then Satan entered into Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve. He left to consult with the chief priests and the captains about how he might betray Jesus to them. [Judas] said to them, "What will you give me if I hand Him over to you?"

[The chief priests and the teachers of the law and the elders of the people] were delighted when they heard this and promised to give [Judas] money. [Judas] agreed, and they gave him thirty pieces of silver.



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From then on [Judas] looked for an opportune time to betray [Jesus], when the crowds were gone.

1 Timothy 6:10 tells us:

10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

Judas was certainly the poster boy for this passage of Scripture. Even as Jesus and the disciples were planning to celebrate the liberation of the Nation of Israel from the bondage of Egypt, Judas was busy figuring out how to use His relationship with Jesus Christ to make money for himself at the celebration.

I doubt that Judas ever actually thought that Jesus would allow Himself to be crucified or even arrested. The Jewish leaders had tried to arrest Jesus several times before, and Jesus simply walked through the midst of them and went on His way. The disciples knew that Jesus' access to the power of God would allow Him to thwart any plan that the Jewish leaders developed to take Him. Of course, the disciples did not anticipate that Jesus would allow Himself to be taken although Jesus told them seven times that He would be arrested and killed. The disciples thought that their ability to fight coupled with Jesus power would allow them to hold off an army.

So Judas did not anticipate that his betrayal would actually lead to Jesus' arrest, but figured that creating another confrontation between Jesus and the Jews would allow him to pick up a quick thirty pieces of silver with no real harm being done. After all, the Jews had confronted Jesus several times during the week and couldn't even outtalk Jesus, much less do anything to Him. Since Judas cared for money more than Jesus, betraying Jesus for money seemed like a good idea to him.

While Judas was planning his betrayal of Jesus, Jesus was planning His last celebration of the Passover during His earthly life. He told Peter and John, in **Matthew 26:17-20, Mark 14:12-17 and Luke 22:7-18:**

“Go into the city, and there you'll meet a man carrying a pitcher of water. Follow him, and whatever home he enters, say to the man of the house, ‘The Teacher says to you, “My time has come. Where is the guest room at your house for Me to eat the Passover with My disciples?” ’ He'll show you a large upper room, furnished and ready. That is where you should prepare for us.”

His disciples left and went into the city as Jesus had instructed them. There they found everything as He had said it would be, and they prepared the Passover.

When it was evening, Jesus came with the twelve. At the appointed time He reclined at the table with the apostles. He told them, **“I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell**



you, I will not observe it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God.”

Jesus then gave all of them a glass of wine, and then, as **John 13:3-4** tells us:

Jesus, knowing the Father had given all things into His hands and that He came from God and was going to God, got up from the supper, took off His outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around His waist.

If you travel to someone’s home in inclement weather, your shoes or boots will probably be wet and/or soiled from the rain or snow. When you enter the home, it would be courteous of you to take off your footwear rather than tracking soil inside of the house. Jewish men in Jesus’ day generally travelled in sandals, so their feet became soiled as they walked on the dusty road to their destination. When they entered someone’s home they generally washed the dirt off of their feet, just as we would take off our footwear.

Well-to-do people had slaves to wash the feet of travelers as they entered the house. Footwashing, then, was considered the job of a person with a low status. When Jesus and the disciples reached the Upper Room to celebrate the Passover, they found that the owner of the house had not assigned a slave to wash feet, and none of the disciples volunteered to do so. Jesus stripped down, as would a slave, wrapped a towel around Himself, and then, as **John 13:5** tells us:

Then [Jesus] poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples’ feet, wiping them with the towel around His waist.

Since footwashing was the job of a slave, the bold Peter protested about that which Jesus was doing. **John 13:6-10** records:

When [Jesus] came to Simon Peter, Peter said to Him, “Lord, do You intend to wash my feet?”

“You don’t yet understand what I am doing,” Jesus answered, “but later you will.”

“You will never wash my feet!” Peter said.

“If I don’t wash you,” answered Jesus, “you have no part with Me.”

“Lord, then wash not only my feet,” Simon Peter replied, “but also my hands and my head!”

Jesus responded, “The one who has bathed doesn’t need to wash anything except his feet—he is completely clean. And you disciples are clean, although not all of you.”

Jesus told Peter that their relationship was contingent upon Peter having his feet washed by Jesus. Jesus’ humble giving of Himself as He washed the disciples’ feet, dusty from the road and sweaty from the exertion of the day, was a symbol of the sacrifice that Jesus was going to make on the Cross to save our lives, we who are dirty and sweaty, from sin. Paul speaks of Jesus Christ, in **Philippians 2:6-7**, saying that:



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6 [Jesus]. being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God,

7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.

To be the sacrifice for our sins, Jesus descended from His Heavenly status to become a mere man, and took on the role of a slave. He made Himself to be, as Isaiah 53 says, humble as a lamb being led to the slaughter. Jesus Christ gave up Heaven to become a slave to take care of us, just as a loving mother with a Ph.D. would give up the status of her powerful position to take care of her infant.

Peter, being the leader of the disciples after Jesus, protested that the Lord should not be the one washing feet. Peter did not take the towel, the basin or the water from Jesus, because Peter thought that, rather than either he or Jesus, someone lower on the chain of command should be washing feet.

The unsaved man might, as did Peter, consider the Cross of Calvary too degrading for the Savior of the World. The unsaved man might want someone that lived and died in great pomp, glory and honor, rather than a man that was crucified as a criminal, as his Savior and Lord. The unsaved man might not find Jesus to be an adequate Savior, thinking that anyone that washes feet does not rank high enough to be his Lord.

The unsaved man might be too proud to come to Jesus, a Savior that washed feet, and died the death of a criminal on the Cross of Calvary, but the fact of the matter is that receiving this humble, footwashing, dying Savior is the only way to get into heaven. It is not by the works of righteousness that we have done that we can avoid hell, because, in the sight of God, all of our righteousness is as a filthy rag.

It is only by the ministry of Jesus Christ that we can be saved, by accepting and emulating His humility as He washed the feet of His disciples and then allowed Himself to be stripped and hung on the Old Rugged Cross for everyone to see. It is only by adopting Jesus' humility, rather than holding on to our preconceived misconception of our own goodness that we can be saved.

Jesus finished his explanation to Peter by saying that all of the disciples were not clean, because Judas was still in the midst. And then, in our text, Jesus spoke to all of the disciples, and to us, as he said, in **John 13:12-17**

12 So when [Jesus] had washed their feet, taken His garments, and sat down again, He said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you?"

13 You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am.

14 If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.

15 For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.

16 Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master;



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nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him.

17 If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.

God has given us the plan. Our salvation will not come by our protestations of righteousness, or by our comparisons of ourselves and our goodness with that of anyone else, but only by our humble acceptance of our sinfulness and our need for the blessed ministry of Jesus Christ. The unsaved are lost, not because of their sin, as we are, lost or saved, all sinners, but because of their arrogance, in that they refuse to recognize that they are not good enough to merit God's Kingdom; they make excuses to justify their righteousness rather than accept the fact that they are sinners that are just not humble enough for Heaven. Heaven is not a place for good people, but only for the humble people, because only the humble can be saved.

We are not greater than our master, Jesus Christ, who gave us the ultimate example of humility. If He washed feet and suffered embarrassment and death on the Cross of Calvary for our sins and the sins of others, we must certainly humble ourselves, put away our protestations of righteousness, and throw ourselves on the mercy of His Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound, the saved a wretch like me.

I once was lost, but now, I'm found, was blind, but now I see.

Pastor Darryl R. Curtis
Family Life Baptist Church