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## **INNOCENT AS DOVES, WISE AS SERPENTS**

When Jesus was unjustly and falsely tried, He verbally defended Himself against their unethical treatment of Him. When questioned about His teaching, Jesus reminded them that He had taught openly without secret and there were plenty of witnesses who could vouch for what Jesus said (Jn. 18:19-21). After being struck for His direct answer, Jesus then questioned the right this officer had to do so, demanding evidence be submitted of the wrong Jesus spoke which would have justified the hit (John 18:22-24). As admonished to be gentle as doves but wise as serpents, we have the right to call out injustice and shed light on unethical hypocritical action even while submissively suffering such unjust treatment and circumstances. Note the comical way this freed slave residing in Dayton, OH

responded to a request from his former master to return and work for him on his plantation: "Sir, I got your letter, and was glad to find that you had not forgotten Jordon, and that you wanted me to come back and live with you again, promising to do better for me than anybody else can. I have often felt uneasy about you. I thought the Yankees would have hung you long before this, for harboring Rebs they found at your house. I suppose they never heard about your going to Colonel Martin's to kill the Union soldier that was left by his company in their stable. Although you shot at me twice before I left you, I did not want to hear of your being hurt, and am glad you are still living. It would do me good to go back to the dear old home again, and see Miss Mary and Miss Martha and Allen, Esther, Green, and

Lee. Give my love to them all, and tell them I hope we will meet in the better world, if not in this. I would have gone back to see you all when I was working in the Nashville Hospital, but one of the neighbors told me that Henry intended to shoot me if he ever got the chance. I want to know particularly what the good chance is you propose to give me. I am doing tolerably well here. I get twenty-five dollars a month, with victuals and clothing; have a comfortable home for Mandy – the folks call her Mrs. Anderson, -- and the children – Milly, Jane, and Grundy -- go to school and are all learning well. The teacher says Grundy has a head for a preacher. They go to Sunday school, and Mandy and me attend church regularly. We are kindly treated. Sometimes we overhear others saying, "Them colored people were slaves" down in Tennessee. The children feel hurt when they hear such remarks; but I tell them it was no disgrace in Tennessee to belong to Colonel Anderson. Many darkeys would have been proud, as I used to be, to call you master. Now if you will write and say what wages you will give me, I will be better able to decide whether it would be to my

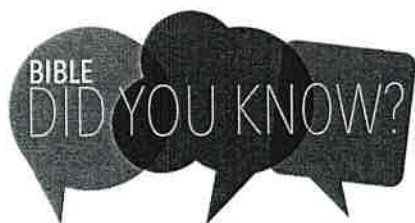
advantage to move back again. As to my freedom, which you say I can have, there is nothing to be gained on that score, as I got my free papers in 1864 from the Provost-Marshall-General of the Department of Nashville. Mandy says she would be afraid to go back without some proof that you were disposed to treat us justly and kindly; and we have concluded to test your sincerity by asking you to send us our wages for the time we served you. This will make us forget and forgive old scores, and rely on your justice and friendship in the future. I served you faithfully for thirty-two years, and Mandy twenty years. At twenty-five dollars a month for me, and two dollars a week for Mandy, our earnings would amount to eleven thousand six hundred and eighty dollars. Add to this the interest for the time our wages have been kept back, and deduct what you paid for our clothing, and three doctor's visits to me, and pulling a tooth for Mandy, and the balance will show what we are in justice entitled to. Please send the money by Adam's Express, in care of V. Winters, Esq., Dayton, Ohio. If you fail to pay us for our faithful labors in the past, we can have little faith in your promises in the future. We trust

the good Maker has opened your eyes to the wrongs which you and your fathers have done to me and my fathers, in making us toil for you for generations without recompense. Here I draw my wages every Saturday night; but in Tennessee there was never any pay-day for the negroes any more than for the horses and cows. Surely there will be a day of reckoning for those who defraud the laborer of his hire. In answering this letter, please state if there would be any safety for my Milly and Jane, who are now grown up, and both good-looking girls. You know how it was with poor Matilda and Catherine. I would rather stay here and starve – and die, if come to that – than have my girls brought to shame by the violence and wickedness of their young masters. You will also please state if there has been any schools opened for the colored children in your neighborhood. The great desire of my life now is to give my children an education, and have them form virtuous habits. Say howdy to George Carter, and thank him for taking the pistol from you when you were shooting at me. From your old servant, Jordon Anderson.”

“Behold, the pay of the laborers who mowed your fields, and which has been withheld by

you, cries out against you; and the outcry of those who did the harvesting has reached the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. You have lived luxuriously on the earth and led a life of wanton pleasure; you have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter. You have condemned and put to death the righteous man; he does not resist you,” James 5:4-6.

– Daniel Ruegg



***“Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, and a branch from his roots will bear fruit. The Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and strength, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. And He will delight in the fear of the LORD, and He will not judge by what His eyes see, nor make a decision by what His ears hear; but with righteousness He will judge the poor, and decide with fairness for the afflicted of the earth.”***

***Isaiah 11:1-4***



# MONTHLY CHALLENGE

**DIRECTIONS:** Each first Sunday of the month, we will have challenges that you should attempt to complete by the end of the month. If we all, as members, complete these challenges, our church will grow in spirit and in number.

## 1) Hiding God's Word In Our Heart Challenge

*Psalm 119:11 "Your word I have treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against You."*

God's word is a sword for us to fight evil with in temptation. This particular sword is not to be kept in a sheath worn on a belt attached to our hip, but rather hidden deep into our hearts ready for use. While we could have a bible strapped to our waist at all times if we preferred, still, this is not the most effective method of battling sin by turning to a passage as fast as possible. It is to be so impressed upon us that the familiarity of the meaning of its words is so entrenched deep within us that sin becomes near impossible to penetrate through. As the Psalm indicates, His word is to be treasured deep within us to guard our souls from sin. Memorizing scripture is a great way to bury it deep in our hearts. While there are plenty of lengthy Psalms within the scriptures, there are several shorter ones which would be great practice for memorizing. Psalm 26 is a mere 12 verses which outline the kind of character God is pleased with which would be great to commit to memory. Psalm 120 through 131 are all Psalms 10 verses or less which would fill our hearts with the pure love of God. How many can you memorize?

## 2) USING YOUR BIBLE IN THE WORLD

Share the following verses with someone who does not attend this congregation at least twice this month:

### *Psalm 26:1-12*

"Vindicate me, O LORD, for I have walked in my integrity, and I have trusted in the LORD without wavering. Examine me, O LORD, and try me; test my mind and heart. For Your lovingkindness is before my eyes, and I have walked in Your truth. I do not sit with deceitful men, nor will I go with pretenders. I hate the assembly of evildoers, and I will not sit with the wicked. I shall wash my hands in innocence, and I will go about Your altar, O LORD, that I may proclaim with the voice of thanksgiving and declare all Your wonders. O LORD, I love the habitation of Your house and the place where Your glory dwells. Do not take my soul away along with sinners, nor my life with men of bloodshed, in whose hands is a wicked scheme, and whose right hand is full of bribes. But as for me, I shall walk in my integrity; redeem me, and be gracious to me. My foot stands on a level place; in the congregations I shall bless the LORD."