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*Perfected in the Word Ministry*

“What Can Separate Us?”

Romans 8:35-39

*Seventeenth Annual Holy Convocation*

*Charismatic Churches of God in Christ International*

Holy Convocation 2014 ~ Evangelical Night

August 20, 2014



**Preliminary Remarks:**

Church, the Lord is calling us, this evening, to a rekindled relationship; through His word, precepts (commandments), and covenants (solemn promises).

**Text:**

**Romans 8:35-39**

<sup>35</sup> **Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?**

<sup>36</sup> As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. [Psalm 44:22]

<sup>37</sup> Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

<sup>38</sup> For I am persuaded, that neither **death**, nor **life**, nor **angels**, nor **principalities**, nor **powers**, nor **things present**, nor **things to come**,

<sup>39</sup> Nor **height**, nor **depth**, nor **any other creature**, shall be able to separate us from the **love of God**, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

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## *Perfected in the Word Ministry*

### **Introduction:**

There is a song that my father (the late Chief Apostle James A. Parson, Sr., Ph.D.) used to sing (which was one of his favorites); and he would sing it with such gusto and vocal vibrato (tremolo, pulsing effect, or voice quiver). I used to laugh at the way his voice would tremble as he sang this song. But one day I discovered that I had the same amount of vibrato in my own vocal chords. It was then that I realized the strength of the meaning behind his conviction to the biblical truth as recorded in Romans 8:35: **"I'll Let Nothing Separate Me" ~**

[Verse]

I'll let nothing separate me from His love;  
I'll let nothing separate me from His love;  
Through hard trials, tribulations, persecutions, I'll be faithful;  
I'll let nothing separate me from His love.

There is another version of this song, written by Walt Whitman and performed by The Soul Children of Chicago; inspired by Romans 8:39: **"I'll Let Nothing Separate Me" ~**

[Chorus]

I'll let nothing separate me from the love of God.  
I'll let nothing separate me from the love of God;  
Neither life or death or anything that's to love,  
Nor height or depth nor any other creature,  
I'll let nothing separate me from the love of God.

[Verse]

In this day of misguided direction,  
People are living in all types of corruption.  
Jesus, my Savior, is saving men's souls today,  
So I'll let nothing and nobody turn me away.

[Vamp]

I'll let nothing separate me.

My subject for *Evangelical Night* of this **Seventeenth Holy Convocation**, as inspired through the anointing of the Holy Spirit, and based on the words of this song, is: **"What Can Separate Us?"**

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# Perfected in the Word Ministry

## I. Who Shall Separate Us? [Romans 8:35-39]

Church, Paul (an apostle of Jesus Christ), and the writer to the church in Rome, asks this rhetorical question: **Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?** Then he immediately asserts his privileged viewpoint in response, with a chain of *seventeen events* in election, which serve to guarantee our Christian hope for eternity; even in dire earthly circumstances. **Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?**

**Shall things** that we are more than able to conquer through Christ Jesus? [List of 7]

1. **Tribulation?** [trouble, suffering or affliction]
  - *Def: grievous trouble; severe trial or suffering; an affliction*
  - *Syn: adversity, affliction, burden, cross to bear, crucible, curse, difficulty, hard knock, hard time, misery, misfortune, oppression, ordeal, wronging*
2. **Distress?** [calamity or hard times]
  - *Def: great pain, anxiety, or sorrow; acute physical or mental suffering*
  - *Syn: anguish, anxiety, bad news, dejection, desolation, disappointment, discomfort, disquietude, embarrassment, grief, headache, heartache, heartbreak, irritation, misery, mortification, ordeal, perplexity, sadness, shame, sorrow, torment, torture, trial, unconsolability, unhappiness, vexation, visitation, worry, wretchedness*
3. **Persecution?** [hatred]
  - *Def: pursued with harassing or oppressive treatment, especially because of religion, race, or beliefs; harass persistently.*
  - *Syn: aggrieve, crucify, exile, expel, harass, maltreat, martyr, molest/molestation, oppress, pick on, plague, pursue, tease, torture, tyrannize, vex/vexation, victimize*
4. **Famine?** [hunger]
  - *Def: extreme hunger; starvation*
  - *Syn: destitution, drought, misery, poverty, scarcity, starvation, want*
5. **Nakedness?** [homelessness, destitution or poverty]
  - *Def: without clothing or covering; nude; bare, stripped, or destitute; without a covering, or protection; defenseless; unprotected; exposed*
  - *Syn: bareness, exposure, uncovering, undress*
6. **Peril?** [danger]
  - *Def: exposure to injury, loss, or destruction; grave risk; jeopardy; danger*
  - *Syn: endangerment, exposure, hazard, insecurity, jeopardy, liability, menace, pitfall, risky business, uncertainty, vulnerability; hazardousness, inconvenience, perilousness, risk, troublesomeness, uncomfortableness, unhandiness, unmanageability, unwieldiness, peradventure, precariousness, precipice, defenselessness; quagmire (a situation from which extrication is very difficult, if not impossible); difficulty, dilemma, entanglement, impasse, perplexity, predicament, quandary*
7. **Sword?** [backstabbing]
  - *Def: a weapon as the symbol of military power, punitive justice, authority; war, combat, slaughter, or violence, especially military force or aggression; mutually antagonistic or hostile; opposed; to slay; execute*
  - *Syn: dagger, damascus blade, weapon*

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**Shall things** that Christ Jesus has already conquered through resurrection? [List of 10]

8. **Death?** [nothing dead]

9. **Life?** [nothing living]

10. **Angels?** [nothing angelic]

11. **Principalities?** [nothing demonic]

- *Def: [Theology] an order of angels; supramundane powers often in conflict with God. Ephesians 6:12 [“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”].*
- *Syn: absolute rule, ascendancy, authority, command, control, dominance, dominion, driver's seat, paramountcy, power, predominance, preeminence, preponderance, prepotence, primacy, principality, sovereignty, superiority, supreme authority, sway, transcendence*

12. **Powers?** [governments]

- *Def: political or national strength; the possession of control or command over others; authority; ascendancy; delegated authority; authority granted to a person or persons in a particular office or capacity; a military or naval force; a deity; divinity; an order of angels*
- *Syn: ascendancy, authority, authorization, birthright, clout, command, connection, diadem, domination, dominion, influence, jurisdiction, law, leadership, license, management, might, omnipotence, predominance, prerogative, prestige, privilege, regency, right, rule, say-so, sovereignty, strength, strings, superiority, supremacy*

13. **Things Present?** [nothing today, or impending and threatening]

14. **Things to Come?** [nothing tomorrow, or in the future]

15. **Height?** [nothing high, no mountain]

16. **Depth?** [nothing low, no valley, nothing under the sea]

17. **Any other Creature?** [thinkable or unthinkable, or anything else in all creation]

Hope is defined as faith that all circumstances work together to deepen our relationship with Christ and reconfirm our salvation in Christ, through the grace and faithfulness of God. Church, there is no chain of events, that have occurred within our *seventeen-years* as the Charismatic Churches, which shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

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## *Perfected in the Word Ministry*

### II. What Can Separate Us?

It is a true statement (then), and we should be persuaded that nothing “*shall*” be able to separate us from the love of Christ – who died for us! “*Shall*” ~ meaning nothing *will be able* to separate us from the love of Christ. “*Shall*” ~ used to express *what is inevitable* or *seems likely to happen in the future*, regarding our faith and hope for eternal life with Christ Jesus. “*Shall*” ~ used to express our *determination and resolve* to walk with Jesus.

Reverend Donald Vails was also inspired by the recorded words in Romans 8:35, when he wrote the song: “*I’m Determined to Walk With Jesus*” ~

[Verse]

I’m determined, to walk with Jesus, Yes I am  
I’m determined, to walk with Jesus, Yes I am  
Through hard trials, tribulations, persecutions, I am determined.  
I’m determined, to walk with Jesus, Yes I am.

[Chorus]

I’m going to walk---with---)E--SUS.

[Ending]

I’m determined, to walk with Jesus, Yes I am.

But what about **Sin**? “**Sin**” is “**enmity**” with God! “**Enmity**” is defined as: a feeling or condition of *hostility; hatred; ill will; animosity; or antagonism*. “**Sin**” is: acrimony, alienation, antagonism, antipathy, bitterness, detestation, dislike, hate, hostility, ill will, loathing, malevolence, malice, malignancy, malignity, rancor, spite, unfriendliness, or venom with God! “**Sin**” is transgression of the law (or commandments) of God! God, Himself, had to turn His own back on Jesus – while on the Cross of Crucifixion – as Jesus bore the weight of the sins of mankind, from the days of Adam to our present and future days!

[And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? ~ Mark 15:34]

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- **Romans 8:1-8** ~ There is therefore now *no condemnation* [to pronounce a verdict or judgment of guilty] to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. **Because the carnal mind is enmity against God:** for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.
- **James 4:4** ~ Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is **enmity with God?** Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the **enemy** of God.
- **Genesis 3:15** ~ And I will put **enmity** between thee [man] and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.
- **Romans 6:1,2,12,13,15** ~ What shall we say then? **Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?** God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? ... Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God ... What then? **Shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace?** God forbid.
- **1Corinthians 6:9-12** ~ Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither *fornicators*, nor *idolaters*, nor *adulterers*, nor *effeminate*, nor *abusers of themselves with mankind*, Nor *thieves*, nor *covetous*, nor *drunkards*, nor *revilers*, nor *extortioners*, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.
- **2Peter 3:1-4** ~ This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the *commandment* of us the *apostles* of the Lord and Saviour: Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days *scoffers*, *walking after their own lusts*, And saying, *Where is the promise of his coming?* for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.
- **1John 2:15-17** ~ Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, *the lust of the flesh*, and *the lust of the eyes*, and *the pride of life*, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

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- **Romans 1:18-32** ["God's Wrath Against Mankind"] ~ For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the *invisible things* of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; *so that they are without excuse*. Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to *uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts*, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: Who *changed the truth of God into a lie*, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. For this cause God gave them up unto *vile affections*: for *even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature*. And *likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly*, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, *God gave them over to a reprobate mind*, to do those things which are not convenient; Being filled with all *unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness*; full of *envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity, whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful*: Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, *not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them*.
- **2 Timothy 3:1-8** ~ This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be *lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures* more than lovers of God; Having *a form of godliness*, but *denying the power* thereof: from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and *lead captive silly women laden with sins*, led away with *divers lusts*, ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.
- **1 Timothy 1:8-11** ~ But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully; Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the *lawless and disobedient*, for the *ungodly* and for *sinners*, for *unholy* and *profane*, for *murderers of fathers* and *murderers of mothers*, for *manslayers*, For *whoremongers*, for *them that defile themselves with mankind*, for *menstealers*, for *liars*, for *perjured persons*, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine; According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust.

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- **Matthew 12:30-33** ~ He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad. Wherefore I say unto you, *All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.* And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come. Either make the [fig] tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the [fig] tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for **the tree is known by his fruit.**
- **1]John 1:8-10** ~ If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

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### III. Return Unto God!

“The sting of death is sin; and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!” [1Corinthians 15:56,57]  
Saints of the Most High, God provides a way for us to put aside our personal grievance of sin and the enmity it has created, and become reconciled to Him!

- **Jeremiah 3:12,13** ~ ... **Return**, thou *backsliding Israel*, saith the LORD; and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, saith the LORD, and I will not keep anger for ever. Only *acknowledge thine iniquity*, that thou hast *transgressed* against the LORD thy God, and hast scattered thy ways to the strangers under every green tree, and ye have not obeyed my voice, saith the LORD.
- **Jeremiah 3:22** ~ ... **Return**, ye *backsliding children*, and I will heal your *backslidings* [*cure you of backsliding*].
- **Jeremiah 3:14,15** ~ ... [**Return**], O *backsliding children*, saith the LORD; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion: And *I will give you pastors according to mine heart*, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.
- **Zechariah 1:3,4** ~ ... [**Return**] ye unto me, saith the LORD of hosts, and I will [**return**] unto you, saith the LORD of hosts. Be ye not as your fathers, unto whom the former prophets have cried, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; **Turn** ye now from your evil ways, and from your evil doings: but they did not hear, nor hearken unto me, saith the LORD.
- **Malachi 3:7,18,5,4** ~ Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. **Return** unto me, and I will **return** unto you, saith the LORD of hosts. But ye said, Wherein shall we **return**? ... Then shall ye **return**, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not ... And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the *sorcerers*, and against the *adulterers*, and against *false swearers*, and against *those that oppress the hireling in his wages*, the *widow*, and *the fatherless*, and *that turn aside the stranger from his right* [aliens, refuges, Mexicans, etc.], and fear not me, saith the LORD of hosts ... Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the LORD, as in the days of old, and as in former years.
- **Galatians 5:1,13,19-21** ~ Stand fast therefore in the *liberty* wherewith Christ hath made us free, and *be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage* ... For, brethren, ye have been called unto *liberty*; only *use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh*, but by love serve one another ... Now the *works of the flesh* are manifest, which are these; *adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings*, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

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“**Mother May I?**” is the classic childhood action game which reinforces the use of *manners*, *respect*, and *obedience*; and is an **illustration** of the **hierarchical relationship** between a **parent** and **child**.

**Summary:** Kids request to take a certain number and type of steps (*baby*, *normal*, *giant*, *etc.*) towards the “mother.” Kids must remember to ask “**Mother May I?**” The first to touch the mother wins the game!

**How to Play:** The “mother” (or “father” if it is a male) stands facing away from a line of kids and selects a child at random, or in order. The mother/father calls out a *direction*, *step type*, and *number of steps*. For example, the mother/father can say: “*Scott, you may take seven* (or any other number) *baby/normal/giant steps forward.*” The child then responds with: “**Mother May I?**” (or “**Father May I?**”). The mother/father states “**Yes!**” or “**No!**” depending on his/her whim, and the **child obeys** and takes the steps. If the **child forgets** to *ask permission*, then he/she goes back to the beginning of the line. The first to touch the Mother/Father wins the game!

**Alternate Version:** Each child takes turns asking: “**Mother/Father May I take [x kind of steps]?**” The mother (or father) replies “**Yes!**” or “**No!**”

**Example:** “**Mother/Father, May I take five giant steps forward?**” The Mother/Father either replies: “**Yes, you may!**” or “**No, you may not, you may take five baby steps forward (or x# steps backward) instead!**” The players usually *move closer* to the Mother/Father but are *sometimes led farther away (backward)*. Even if the mother/father makes an *unfavorable suggestion*, the child must still perform it! If the **child omits** to *ask permission*, he or she is required to go **back** to the beginning of the line!

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Our spiritual walk with God is comprised of **tests** (comprised of *baby*, *normal*, and *giant steps*); which determine our *trust*, *obedience*, *loyalty*, and *commitment* to His will and path (although unknown) for our lives. Each step that we take must hold to the paths which God has prepared for us; and we must not let our feet slip from the course! [Psalm 17:5] Each **step** that we make determines our ability to successfully navigate through obstacles that may hinder our progress (hinderances may either be caused by our own ill-contrived decisions, or by the lure of sin itself)! **Forward** steps (obeying the will of God) afford us the opportunity to **move** in a **forward** direction ... “**toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus** (eternal life)!” [Philippians 3:14] Theme for the **Seventeenth Holy Convocation: “Moving Forward!”**

Conversely, *backward steps* (“*backsliding*”) are steps in our lives that are contrary to the will of God; therefore leading us farther away from Him! Children who have advanced a long way in opposition to the goal of eternal life, are thus brought to ruin (eternal damnation)! The objective of our Heavenly Father is to call sinners to *repentance* and *good works*. “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to **repentance**.” [2Peter 3:9]

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## *Perfected in the Word Ministry*

### IV. The Good and Bad Figs!

The Almighty God uses symbols and metaphors in order to convey His message to mankind – through His spoken word, and through the oracle of His prophets. To amplify God’s passion for a personal relationship with mankind, and His desire for man to be reconciled to Him through repentance, God will set the stage for us to be tested – through a period of tribulation (in the furnace of affliction, or a wilderness experience). God’s ultimate objective is that we develop total faith, trust and dependence upon Him (during our trials and tests), because “the *testing of our faith* develops perseverance; and perseverance must finish its perfect work so that we may become mature and complete in Him!” [James 1:3,4 – NIV paraphrased]

One such metaphor (God uses) is the fruit of the *fig tree*; which was abundant within the Mediterranean region where God’s people lived. The matured “**fruit**” has a *tough peel* [likened to our outward **flesh**], often cracking upon ripeness, and exposing the *pulp beneath* [likened to our **mind**]. The interior is a *white inner rind* [likened to our **spirit/soul**] containing a *seed mass* [likened to our **heart**] bound with jelly-like flesh [which is used to produce a greater **harvest**]. During the reign of Solomon, the *fig tree* was an indicator of national *wealth* and *prosperity*. [And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig tree, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, all the days of Solomon. ~ 1Kings 4:25]

Like the children’s game: “**Mother May I**,” we (as children) sometimes fall into a *backslidden* state (due to disobedience and sin), and may ultimately have to begin our journey again from the starting point (or at the very least, from the place where we once were with the **Almighty Father**)!

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God used the prophet Jeremiah to speak to a *backslidden* people, who were compared to an *unfaithful wife* (prostitute, adulterous, perverted) and *rebellious children*: their infidelity and rebelliousness made judgment inevitable; although restoration and a new covenant were foreshadowed!

- **Jeremiah 24:1-3** ["The Baskets of Figs"] ~ The LORD *shewed me* [symbolically], and, behold, *two baskets of figs* were set before the temple of the LORD, after that Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon had carried away captive Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah, and the princes of Judah, with the carpenters and smiths, from Jerusalem, and had brought them to Babylon. One basket had **very good figs**, even like the figs that are first ripe: and the other basket had **very naughty** [poor] **figs**, which could not be eaten, **they were so bad**. Then said the LORD unto me, What **seest** thou, Jeremiah? [symbolically] And I said, **Figs**; the **good figs**, **very good**; and the **evil**, **very evil**, that cannot be eaten, they are so evil.
- **Jeremiah 24:4-7** ["The Good Figs"] ~ Again the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel; Like these **good figs**, so will I acknowledge them that are carried away **captive** of Judah, whom I have sent out of this place into the land of the Chaldeans **for their good**. For I will set mine eyes upon them **for good ❶**, and I will bring them again to this **land ❷**: and I will **build** them, and not pull them down **❸**; and I will **plant** them, and not pluck them up **❹**. And I will give them an **heart** to know me **❺**, that I am the LORD: and they shall be my people **❻**, and I will be their God **❼**: **for they shall return unto me with their whole heart ❽**.
- **Jeremiah 24:8-10** ["The Bad Figs"] ~ And as the **evil figs**, which cannot be eaten, they are **so evil**; surely thus saith the LORD, So will I give Zedekiah the king of Judah, and his princes, and the residue of Jerusalem, that remain in this land, and them that dwell in the land of Egypt: And I will deliver them to be removed **❶** into all the kingdoms of the earth **for their hurt**, to be **a reproach ❷** and **a proverb ❸**, **a taunt ❹** and **a curse ❺**, in all places whither I shall drive them. And I will send the **sword ❻**, the **famine ❼**, and the **pestilence ❽**, among them, till they be consumed from off the land that I gave unto them and to their fathers.

God is looking for the evidence of *good works* from a *fruitful people*, which can only exist if we are *faithful* and *obedient* to His commands in our walk and *covenant relationship* with Him!

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## Perfecting in the Word Ministry

Jesus performed a miracle of faith, by “cursing” a *barren fig tree*; which symbolically represents the nation of Israel, as well as Christians – as adopted heirs. The most evident meaning of the tree is that the miracle was to encourage His disciples’ faith as they saw Jesus’ authority over nature – and the promise of death for a nonproductive tree!

- **Mark 11:12-14,20,21; Matthew 21:21,22; 24:32** [“The Withered Fig Tree”] ~ The next day as they were leaving Bethany, Jesus was hungry. Seeing in the distance a **fig tree** in leaf, he went to find out **if it had any fruit**. When he reached it, he found nothing but leaves, because **it was not the season for figs**. Then he said to the tree, **“May no one ever eat fruit from you again.”** And his disciples heard him say it ... In the morning, as they went along, they saw the **fig tree** withered from the roots. Peter remembered and said to Jesus, “Rabbi, look! The **fig tree** you cursed has withered!” ... Jesus replied, **“Truly I tell you, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only can you do what was done to the fig tree, but also you can say to this mountain, ‘Go, throw yourself into the sea,’ and it will be done. If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer.”** ... **“Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near.”**

Jesus is constantly looking for the evidence of an *in-season church* [individually, we are the church] that is consistently producing *good fruit* (evident by our works) within our spiritual lives! Like this cursed *fig tree*, some of us show all the *outward signs* of a Christian life, but *inwardly we bare no fruit* (or works) and are therefore *faithless*! We **“have a form of godliness [religious], but deny its power!”** [2Timothy 3:5] We must **bare fruit!** No one knows the day or the hour when the Son of man cometh to check on His harvest ... whether we are fruitful, or whether we bare no fruit! Church, we have a choice: “Either make the [fig] tree good, and [your] fruit good; or else make the [fig] tree corrupt, and [your] fruit corrupt: for **the tree is known by his fruit!**” [Matthew 12:33]

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## *Perfected in the Word Ministry*

### **Conclusion:**

Saints of God, why is it that are we so resistant to change, and so welcoming to the “status quo” regarding our spiritual relationship with God? Where is our zeal for God? Jesus “gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” [Titus 2:14]

Saints, I wouldn’t want it to be said of us [The Charismatic Churches] that we exhibit characteristics of the church in **Ephesus**: Although it was reported that they persevered and endured hardships; yet they forsook their first love, by not retaining their strong and ardent affection (or zeal) for God and sacred things which they had when they were first brought to the knowledge of the truth, and justified by faith in Christ! [Revelation 2:3,4] Instead, they fell backward (the “game”) into their old sinful ways ~ tolerating sin and sinful lusts. The fallen or **backsliding** who have any tenderness of conscience left are easily discouraged, and are apt to think that there is no seed (“fig”) left from which any harvest can be reasonably expected. They need to be told that there is still a seed of godliness remaining, and that it requires only watching and strengthening the things which remain, by prompt application to God through Christ, in order to bring them back (“return”) to the full enjoyment of all they have lost, and to renew them in the spirit of their mind. Yes, some of us have lost ground, but we have not lost all our ground; we might have been much farther advanced, but through mercy we are still in the way. You may not have much zeal, but you do have a little! God still strives with us, still loves us, still waits to be gracious to us; therefore, take courage, set out afresh, come to God through Christ. Believe, love, obey, and you will soon find days more blessed than you have ever yet experienced!

**What Can Separate Us?** Our choice for eternity is contingent on our *fruitful life!*

# Perfected in the Word Ministry

## Altar Call: “Nothing Between”

**Benediction:** May “the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, [e]stablish, strengthen, [and] settle you. To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.” [1Peter 5:10]

## “Nothing Between”

Charles A. Tindley, 1905 [Romans 8:38,39]

[Verse 1]

Nothing between my soul and my Savior,  
Naught of this world’s delusive dream;  
I have renounced all sinful pleasure;  
Jesus is mine, there’s nothing between.

[Refrain]

Nothing between my soul and my Savior,  
So that His blessed face may be seen;  
Nothing preventing the least of His favor;  
Keep the way clear! Let nothing between.

[Verse 2]

Nothing between, like worldly pleasure;  
Habits of life, though harmless they seem,  
Must not my heart from Him ever sever;  
He is my all, there’s nothing between.

[Verse 3]

Nothing between, like pride or station;  
Self or friends shall not intervene;  
Though it may cost me much tribulation,  
I am resolved, there’s nothing between.

[Verse 4]

Nothing between, e’en many hard trials,  
Though the whole world against me convene;  
Watching with prayer and much self-denial,  
I’ll triumph at last, there’s nothing between.

