

A Letter From A Prisoner  
 Clifford Hampton  
 (Serving Life Sentence in Angola, LA)

A few months ago, we published an article in the MM about a prisoner who has, since 1958, been incarcerated in the state prison at Angola, Louisiana. [See MM; Summer issue, 2016, page 4: www/magnoliamessenger.com] Upon reading his story, several readers of the “Messenger” wrote to Clifford Hampton, who is now a brother in Christ, expressing their care and concern. Clifford responded to those who wrote and also sent the following statement and poem to the Magnolia Messenger.

Hello my brothers and sisters:

Lots of people care nothing about someone locked away in prison and would never waste their time to write such a person. However, the people who would write to a prisoner they don't even know are in a class of their own.

So these few words are for those who took their precious time to correspond with me after the article by brother Paul Franks. I responded to all of you who wrote (except for four people for whom I had no return address). You showed that your hearts are full of compassion, kindness -- generous and forgiving. To you I wanted to say just a little more. I John 4:18 says, “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love.” I thank you all for not fearing me and caring enough to reach out.

I have a poem especially for you all. But first, some questions: How tall are you? How tall are those around you? Do you feel small by comparison? Now, you may be thinking in terms of physical measurement, from head to toe. You may have forgotten or over-looked the more important measurement of life. It is not your body that counts, it is not your physical stamina—it is the value of your contribution to the world and your fellow man. It is your... “Human Height.” Let this poem express what I think of you all. In Christian love.

**Human Height**

What is the truthful measurement of human height today?

Is it the inches and the feet,

Or, the pounds that people weigh?

No. It is not the size or weight of bodies on this earth;  
 That determines what a woman or a man is really worth.

It is the height of character, the length of honesty;  
 The width of friendship and the depth of their sincerity.

It is the nobleness that counts, the daily sacrifice;  
 The charity to serve the world, and pay a higher price.

It is the willingness to live for others day and night;  
 That weighs the value of a soul and measures human height.

And in making this observation, I just want to say to you all,

In the measurement of human height,

I think you stand very, very tall!

(Clifford Hampton, #62167; Camp F, 3/L; LA State  
 Prison; Angola, LA 70712)

May 21, 2017

# church of Christ at Alisal

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 Salinas, California 93905-2728  
 (831) 424-9800 or 726-1319  
 Paul McCollum, preacher  
 pulpitpaul@razzolink.com

*You are LOVED  
 and you are in our  
 prayers!*

## To Which Church Do YOU Belong?

DATE	PLACE	BUILDER	NAME
33 A.D.	Jerusalem	Jesus Christ	Church of Christ
606 A.D.	Rome	Boniface III	Roman Catholic
1520 A.D.	Germany	Martin Luther	Lutheran
1534 A.D.	England	Henry VIII	Episcopalian
1536 A.D.	Switzerland	John Calvin	Presbyterian
1550 A.D.	Holland	Robert Brown	Congregational
1607 A.D.	England	John Smyth	Baptist
1739 A.D.	America	John Wesley	Methodist
1830 A.D.	America	Joseph Smith	Mormon
1830 A.D.	America	William Miller	7th Day Adventist
1866 A.D.	America	Mary Baker Eddy	Christian Science
1872 A.D.	America	Charles Russell	Jehovah Witnesses
1871 A.D.	America	Stephen Munford	Church of God

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it. (John 1:1-5)

MEETING UPON THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK  
 Listen on AM Radio 880 KKMC in Salinas, California  
 2nd Friday of each month @ 1:30 pm

Bible Classes..... 9:00 A.M.  
 Assemblies..... 10:00 A.M. & 5:00 P.M.

<http://churchofchristalisal.com/>

WEDNESDAY

Bible Class, Singing, & Prayer..... 6:30 P.M.

# Welcome

Good Morning Brothers and Sisters!

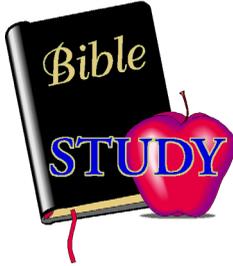
## This Week's Sermon's

A.M. - Making Your Calling and Election Sure

P.M. - Kinds of Prayer

.....  
What's More Important Than Sunday Worship?

by Jack Wilkie



I'm just going to get straight to the point with this one. I want to know – what's more important than Sunday worship?

Because thousands of articles have been written and sermons preached, and yet I still have regular discussions with my preacher friends about how many people are missing on a given Sunday for other activities. Obviously there are many, many Christians who believe there are things more important than being at worship. So I want to know... what is it that's so important? What's going on elsewhere that outranks God?

Obviously I'm not talking about those who are shut-ins, those who are dealing with a sickness, or those who have the unavoidable work assignment from time to time. I'm talking about those who feel like they have something better to do. To them I ask:

*What's more important than worshiping God in the few hours per week set aside specifically for Him?*

*What's more important than making time to encourage and be encouraged by your Christian family?*

*What's more important than gathering with them to study God's word and share in prayers for each other?*

*What's more important than remembering the sacrifice of Jesus by partaking in communion with your fellow Christians?*

I'm not sure what it is that's so important, but I can tell you a few things that aren't the answer to those questions.

I can tell you that sports aren't more important. Like many things in life, sports are perfectly fine and useful and can even be used for good in our lives, but they can also become idols. Skipping worship for youth sports or to watch the big game sends the message to the Savior who died for you that you think He's really important... unless the game happens at the same time. It sends the message to observant little eyes that God can be put in second place for anything we want to prioritize over Him. In an era where a large majority of those raised in the church fall away, the last thing we need is more Christian parents teaching their children that the pew takes a back seat to the players' bench. I don't care if your child earns a scholarship, wins the gold medal, or takes home Super

Bowl MVP, because if his or her soul is lost in the process, the tradeoff was eternally worthless (Mark 8:36 [Open in Logos Bible Software (if available)] ).

I can tell you vacations aren't more important. It's good to get away every now and then, so you can't always be with your home congregation. But I guarantee you that most places you visit will have a congregation of the Lord's people nearby. Worship with them. Going out of town doesn't get you out of God's presence, nor does it take away your call to worship Him. Unplugging from work, school, and everyday life is great... but a Christian should never unplug from God.

I can tell you sleep isn't more important. People get tired, I understand. There aren't many chances to sleep in, and Sunday morning worship means getting up early, especially for those with kids. But nobody even considers catching up on that sleep on Monday morning. Work and school don't get placed on a back burner. If you won't sleep through work but will sleep through Sunday church assembly, think about your priorities and just how seriously you're taking your God. Again, consider the message you're sending to your family, fellow Christians, and non-Christian coworkers.

We preachers are tired of pushing and prodding people to be in the pews on Sunday. We don't do it because we want you to check the box and say you've done your duty for the week. We do it because we know a Christian whose heart has been given to God will agree that nothing is more important than Him and that He comes first in all things.

I can tell you that there's nothing more important on Sunday morning than being there every time you can. There's always an excuse to be somewhere else. Don't take it. Meet with your fellow Christians and show your God that He's important enough to you to put everything aside and give Him your time. Give Him your Sunday nights and Wednesday nights, too, if your church gathers at those times. Be there for them, let them be there for you, and encourage one another to love God more.

## Announcements

1. Brother Jordan will be giving the invitation this Wednesday evening.
2. The long sleeved Tee Shirts have arrived. Get yours before they all are gone.
3. Wednesday evening class, "Christian Evidences". Be prepared - bring your notebook!

~ On the Prayer list

**Norma Decker** - for her health problems

**Bobby Glover** - to successfully teach others about Jesus while in prison.

**Michael White** - for helping others as he serves his time.

**Our country** - and our leaders.

**All the saints** - and the knowledge and zeal to teach those who are outside the body of Christ.

**Have a blessed week!**