

Believers Benefit Package!

I. Slide#1blank **Announce:**

- A. **Slide#2** Mark Williams (MAF) - Personal Update. Transitioning to the US (still missionaries). We are experienced (20 years in Haiti) Ready to embark on our new role with MAF as recruiters. It will be our task to help counsel and raise up the next generation of MAF missionaries. (Glee)
- B. **Slide#3** Opening Prayer: St. Patricks Breastplate (this Sat is St. Patricks Day)
 1. Did you know St. Patrick was neither Irish *nor* Roman Catholic? (*my blog*)
 2. Christ be **within** me, Christ **behind** me, Christ **before** me, Christ **beside** me, Christ to **win** me, Christ to **comfort & restore** me, Christ **beneath** me, Christ **above** me, Christ in **quiet**, Christ in **danger**, Christ in **hearts** of all that love me, Christ in **mouth** of friend & stranger. Praise to the Lord of my salvation, salvation is of Christ the Lord.

II. Slide#4 **Intro:**

- A. **Believers Benefit Package!** - Besides a workers **salary**, he/she might have received a **compensation** package which might include...
 1. A **Benefit Package**; A **Signing Bonus**; & **Death Benefits**.

III. Slide#5 **BENEFIT PACKAGE! (1,2)**

- A. **Slide#6** This chapter is better than the *Ginsu Knives* advertisements...
 1. Their ads ask, "How much would you pay? Don't answer!". Then they included their signature line, "But wait! There's much much more!". And, "if you act now we'll throw in w/your set of steak knives, a stainless potato peeler." And not only that...but wait!
 2. Paul does that here. Not only are we **justified** (debt forgiven) & **made righteous** (His rt placed in our account)
- B. *"But wait! There's more!"*
- C. **Slide#7** **Peace!** (Shalom)
 1. **Not a state of inner tranquility.** "It means to be in a relationship w/God in which all hostility caused by sin has been **removed!**"
 2. A sign in front of a church said, "If life is a puzzle, look here for the missing peace" and spelled that last word p-e-a-c-e!
 3. **Jesus Christ is called the Prince of Peace.** Not the Prince of **Hope** (though that would be appropriate). Not the Prince of **Love**. Not the Prince of **Faith**. **He is called the Prince of Peace.**
 4. **Oh, and caution!** - *Peace with God = War with Satan!*
 - a) You'll never read anywhere in Scripture that you'll have Peace w/Satan!
- D. *"But wait! There's more!"*

E. **Slide#8 Access to God!**

1. By faith we have **gained access** into this gracious relationship.

F. *"But wait! There's more!"*

G. **Slide#9 Hope of sharing the glory of God!**

1. We rejoice in our hope of getting to share in the **glory** of God. Thus, we can face the future w/joy!

2. We can already **reflect** that *glory* by living an **obedient life**.

IV. **Slide#10 SIGNING BONUS! (3-5)**

A. **And not only that** - *"But wait! There's more!"*

B. **Slide#11** 4 time golden glove winning catcher, **Yadier Molina**^[YAH-dee-air] Puerto Rico, received **\$75 million** for 5 years to play with St. Louis Cardinals, & gave him a **signing bonus** for **\$1mil**.

1. In Chicago, **Mayor Rahm Emanuel** is hoping **\$25,000 signing bonuses** will lure new top-shelf **principals** to Chicago, to run as many as **50 low-scoring schools**. *March 3, 2012*

C. Paul records **3 Signing Bonuses** for the believer:

1. Perseverance, Character, Hope.

D. **Slide#12 TRIBULATION produces PERSEVERANCE!**

E. **But what about the sufferings** of Christians? Don't they take away from our **blessedness**?

1. **A:** No, there **is** much value to sufferings!

F. **Tribulation** - *suffering, affliction, hardships, pressures*.

1. (lit.) Pressure - **It describes distress that is brought on by outward circumstances**.

G. **Perseverance** - *patient endurance*. **The capacity to endure calmly, confidently & w/o complaint.**¹

1. **Trials work for us, not against us**. And they develop Christian character!

2. Tribulation is a **thorny tree**, **but** it yields **sweet fruit**.

3. **Slide#13 Example: A guitar string** only fulfills its purpose when it is **removed** from its old package, **stretched** as tight as it will go, & then **plucked!**

4. **Slide#14 Example: When a storm** comes at sea, a ship turns to **face the tempest**. If the vessel allows the storm to hit its **side**, it will capsize. If it turns its **back** to the storm, the storm will drive it wherever the wind blows. **Only in facing the storm is the ship safe**.

5. Remember, **"The dark clouds are things that pass; the blue heavens always abide."**

H. **Slide#15 PERSEVERANCE produces CHARACTER!**

I. **Character** – describes the quality of being approved; *i.e. standing the test*.

¹ J. Sidlow Baxter

1. **Slide#16** After **William Carey** was well established in his pioneer missionary work in India, his supporters in England sent a **printer** to assist him. Soon the two men were turning out portions of the Bible for distribution. Carey had spent many years learning the language so that he could produce the scriptures in the local dialect. He had also prepared dictionaries and grammars for the use of his successors. One day while Carey was away, a **fire broke out** and completely destroyed *the building, the presses, many Bibles, and the precious manuscripts, dictionaries, and grammars*. When he returned and was told of the tragic loss, he showed no sign of despair or impatience. **Instead, he knelt and thanked God that he still had the strength to do the work over again.** He started immediately, not wasting a moment in self-pity. Before his death, he had duplicated and even improved on his earlier achievements. [How **would** you respond? How **have** you responded?]

J. **Slide#17 CHARACTER produces HOPE!**

K. **Hope** – Is the final level in these 3 steps toward spiritual maturity.

1. Hope always *burns brightly* in those whose character has been developed through overcoming trails.
2. “Hope is not the **tuition** we pay as we enroll in the school of adversity. **Rather**, it is the **diploma** awarded to those who by the grace of God do well on the tests.”²
3. Priest & poet **George Herbert** wrote in *The Temple* (1593-1633), “**He who lives in hope danceth without music.**”

L. (5) **Love of God poured out in our hearts!**

1. Frequently at the great Roman games the emperors, in order to gratify the citizens of Rome, would cause **sweet perfumes** to be **rained down** upon them through the awning which covered the amphitheater. (Spurgeon)
 - a) **Such is the love of God!**
2. **Slide#18** It reminds me of the ride **Soaring Over California** at Disney’s **California Adventure**, the simulated hang-glider flight over California.
 - a) You feel your *feet dangle free* as you are suspended up 45’ in the air.
 - b) **You’re immersed inside a massive 80’ domed screen** projected all around you.
 - c) Your flight is accompanied by calming movement & a tranquil musical soundtrack.
 - d) **And injected into the air stream that’s blowing on you is the scent of orange blossoms** as you fly over a **Ventura’s Orange fields**.

M. **Billy Graham taught...**

² Shepherds Notes, pg.35.

1. When we preach **Atonement**, it is atonement: *planned by love, provided by love, given by love, finished by love, & necessitated because of love.*
 2. When we preach the **Resurrection** of Christ, we are preaching the **miracle** of love.
 3. When we preach the **Return** of Christ, we are preaching the **fulfillment** of love.
- N. These words in vs.5 teach the *inwardness* of true, Christian religion.
1. Christianity isn't only something **believed**; it is something **experienced**.
 2. "Christianity is God, no longer in Temples of man's building, **but** immediately known & possessed in the human heart through direct invasion of the Holy Spirit."³

V. Slide#19 DEATH BENEFITS! (6-11)

- A. If he did so much for us when we were **enemies**, think what He will do for us now that we are **His children**.
- B. Death Benefits? *Yes, His death...is our Benefit!*
1. A *Death Benefits* is the payment made to a beneficiary from a policy, when the policyholder dies. Also called survivor benefits.
 2. **Jesus** is the policyholder. **We** are the beneficiary. **We** reap the survivor benefits.
- C. (8) These **4 words** are the most important for humanity, ever recorded. *Christ died for us!*
1. *It is a Historical Act/Christ died; It has Theological Significance/for us.*
 2. In 1944, C.E. Goodman of Hallmark Greeting Cards wrote a slogan: "When You Care Enough to Send the Very Best."
 - a) We can say the same about *God the Father!*
 3. **Slide#20,21** J.C.Ryle, "Sin must indeed be exceeding sinful, when the Father must needs give His only Son to be the sinner's Friend!"
 4. We can be **Triply-sure** God loves us! (H.S. in vs.5b - Father in 8a - Jesus in 8b)
- D. (9) Another benefit of justification is the **assurance** it brings about the **final judgment**, *saved from wrath.*
1. *Wishful thinking? Good guess work?* – Nope, it is based upon the solid foundation of what God **HAS** already done!
 - a) Note: *His blood,...*not our sweat & tears!
 2. *And he did this based on our goodness? No, our badness!*
 - a) We were His enemies. We were at our very worse!
 3. **Slide#22,23** There is a saying among Italian sculptors, who often miss the chisel and hit their own hands with the hammer: *When the blood flows out, the mastery enters.*

³ J. Sidlow Baxter. Awake My Heart, pg.162.

- a) **It was so with Jesus.** It was his death on Calvary that made him the master of our souls.
"There is power in the blood."

E. (10,11) My **insecure** *Christian friends* listen to vs.10,11 well!

1. This is God's **how-much-more** argument!
2. If God did this when we were **at our worst**, *how much more* will He do for us, now that we **have been made right** w/Him :)
- a) A certain **medieval monk** announced he would be preaching next Sunday evening on *"The Love of God."* As the shadows fell and the light ceased to come in through the cathedral windows, the congregation gathered. In the **darkness** of the altar, the monk **lighted a candle** and carried it to the crucifix. First of all, he illumined the **crown of thorns**, next, the **two wounded hands**, then the **marks of the spear wound**. In the hush that fell, he blew out the candle and left the chancel. *There was nothing else to say.*
3. **Last Song:** *Before the throne of God above - I have a strong and perfect plea - A great High Priest whose name is Love - Who ever lives and pleads for me.*

There is a story about a **general** under the **Emperor Cyrus**. While he was away, his wife was accused of treason and sentenced to die. The general returned before the sentence was carried out. He pleaded with Cyrus to let him die in his wife's place. Cyrus was touched. "Love like that must not be spoiled by death," Cyrus said. He pardoned the wife. And as they left the palace, the husband said, "Did you notice how kindly the king looked at us when he gave you a free pardon?" She said, "No. I had no eyes for the king. I saw only the man who was willing to die for me."

***Do you have eyes only for **Jesus**, who was not only willing but **did die** for you?