

Ministers:
the congregation

Kenny Chumbley
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Sunday:
8:00 AM: WGCY
9:00 AM: Worship

Wednesday:
6:30 PM: Bible Study

[gibsoncitychurchof
Christ.com](http://gibsoncitychurchofChrist.com)

This Past Week:
Worship—32
Wednesday—17

For meditation:
Ecclesiastes 12.2
What two advantages
does youth have over
old age that are men-
tioned in this verse?

Radio program:
WGCY FM, 106.3
Sundays at 8 AM

The ins and outs of life

1 Timothy 6.7

Our coming in. Birth is a mystery, but I believe it involves a human initiative, granted by God, that results in the forming of a human body from preexisting material. Unlike Hindus, I don't believe in the preexistence of the soul; I don't believe I existed before my conception; I believe God creates a soul *ex nihilo*, out of nothing, and supplies it to a newly formed body at the point of conception. In both the making of a body and the creating of a soul, love (on man's part, certainly on God's) is the impetus.

Our going out. Death is a mystery. The body dies but the spirit, says Solomon, returns to the God who gave it (Eccl. 12.7).

We bring nothing in. Except, of course, our body. Man has a body, but he is not just a body. Once we get here, we accumulate and hoard family, friends, money, stuff—many temporary possessions, most of which our kids will throw in the biggest dumpster the garbage company will deliver to the driveway once we're gone.

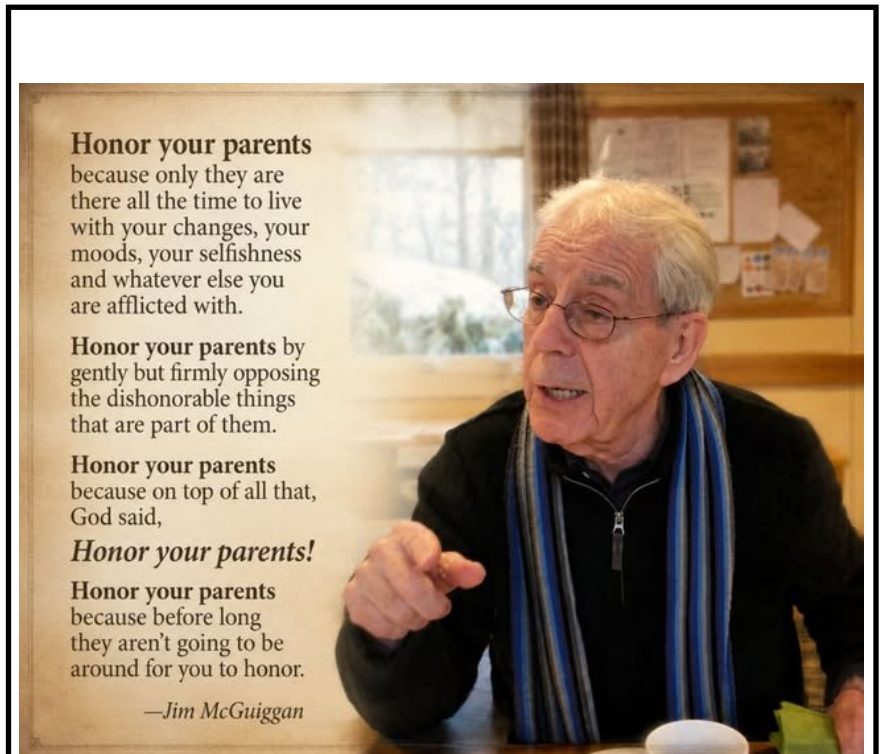
We take nothing out. But there's a caveat. There are things acquired in life we will take with us. Our body and temporal possessions can't be kept for ever, but our character, for good or bad, will be. We'll take with us our conscience, faith, hope, love, patience, meekness, goodness, and brotherly kindness. Unbelievers will take their unbelief with them.

It's a fact that the spiritual things we will take with us out of this world will determine our eternal weal or woe.

kenny

Gibson City church of Christ

Highway 47 South, Gibson City, IL



Jim McGuigan
1937–2026

Sermon: 1 Samuel 17, Philippians 4.8–9

How to kill a giant

2 August 2026

An end worse than the beginning

Matthew 12.43–45

Looking back on the battle of Waterloo nearly fifty years after the battle was fought, Victor Hugo wrote, “It is only barbarous peoples who undergo rapid growth after a victory. That is the temporary vanity of torrents swelled by a storm” (*Les Misérables*). His point is that **victory is not the same as conversion**; just because we win doesn’t mean we’re better off for it.

This is Christ’s point in Matthew 12.43–45. Speaking to the Jewish nation as a whole (v 45), He talks about a house from which a demon of a tenant has been evicted. With the occupant gone, the owner did what rental property owners do: he fixes the place up, but it seems he didn’t do much thereafter to attract a new tenant. When the old tenant learns his former residence was vacant, he moves back in along with seven roommates nastier than he, leaving the house in worse shape than ever.

This has happened to my nation in my lifetime. The greatest generation sailed across oceans to fight devils and liberate the enslaved. Their sacrifices were great, their example was heroic. If ever there was a war to end all wars, you’d think World War II would have been it. The world is grateful that demons like Hitler, Mussolini, and Hirohito were cast out; such was a movement in the direction of righteousness for which men give thanks.

But less than a century later our nation is in worse shape and greater danger than ever. Why? Because **victory wasn’t followed by conversion**. For all the breakthroughs, innovations, and marvels that have come along since WW II—in medicine, education, business, communications, etc.—as Hugo put it, our growth is just a stream swollen by a storm that has turned out to be more destructive than beneficial.

During my lifetime, America has done everything it can to keep Christ out while letting the devil in, and it has taken a tremendous toll. But Christ will still come in if we let Him. “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me” (Rev. 3.20). It’s not too late for conversion, individually and nationally. If it could happen in Nineveh (Jon. 3), if it could happen to Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 4), it can happen here. “Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord” (Ps. 33.12).

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The 3 tests of persuasion

Take time to read Paul’s two great “I am persuaded” statements—Romans 8.38–39 and 2 Timothy 1.12—and ask yourself, “How could Paul be so certain about Jesus? How was he so sure that Jesus was unchanging and unchangeable, that His loyalty would never lapse, that His grace would always be sufficient to his need, and that He would be with him all the days of his life?” How could Paul be confident that at the center this world and its ways is the loving heart of an eternal Father?

In Cambridge professor Herbert H. Farmer’s 1942 book, *Towards Belief in God*, the author cites three “elements of conviction” by which ordinary people come to accept something as true. I’m going to summarize Farmer’s three factors this way:

The subjective test: is it appealing? There are certain facts and people we like the first time we hear them or meet them. They ring true. They shine in their own light. They have a compellingness about them. Something in them appeals to something in us. Nothing about the Tesla Cybertruck appeals to me; I’d rather drive a car that doesn’t look like a hotel ice machine on wheels. We usually buy cars that catch our eye, that look good to us (even if they end up being recalled).

The practical test: does it work? The second consideration is objective: no matter how good something or someone looks at first glance, is the appearance verified in practice? Is the good-looking car mechanically sound? Is the appealing person a genuine human being? Things and people are not always as they seem; first impressions are not always correct; the proof of the pudding is in the eating. Does anyone remember the DeLorean? The gull-wing doors were cool, but the car was plagued by performance and safety issues and only lasted three years.

The rational test: does it make sense? Does it explain, appeal to reason? Does it answer more questions than it raises? There is no philosophy of life that answers all the questions, but the way forward is not that of looking for a position in which there is no doubt at all, but of accepting the position for which the doubts are fewest.

None of these tests by itself is sufficient to produce the level of certainty Paul had in Jesus, but taken together, these tests offer a firm foundation for unreservedly embracing Christ and Christianity and for rejecting Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, atheism, marxism, communism and any other “ism” there is.

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