

Holiness Heritage

Sunday School Quarterly

Spring Quarter
March, April, May 2024

Paul's Letters to Corinth

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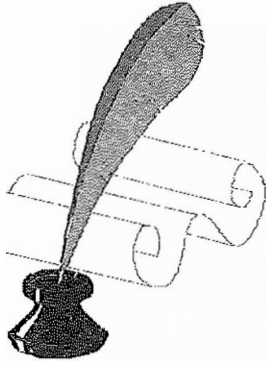
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We Believe:

1. The Scriptures are inspired by God and are the Divine rule of faith and conduct. We use the King James Version of the Bible.
2. The Triune God consisting of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.
3. The virgin birth, sinless life, death, physical resurrection and deity of the Lord Jesus Christ.
4. The fall of man in the Garden of Eden. Man has a sinful nature and is unable to save himself.
5. The salvation of man through faith in Jesus and His blood.
6. The ordinances of the church are baptism in water and holy communion.
7. The baptism of the Holy Ghost with the evidence of speaking in other tongues as the Spirit gives the utterance.
8. The church as the redeemed and "called out" of God.
9. The Divinely called and scripturally ordained ministry.
10. Divine healing for the body as a provision of Calvary.
11. Sanctification of spirit, soul, and body.
12. The believer should live a life of holiness and separation from the world.
13. The second coming of Christ.
14. The millennial reign of Christ.
15. The final judgment.

While this list does not cover everything that we believe, this statement of faith covers the fundamental doctrines that we hold to be true.



From the Editor .

John 5:2. *Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. 3. In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, **waiting for the moving of the water.** 8. **Jesus saith** unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and **walk.** 9. And immediately the man was made whole, and **took up his bed, and walked:***

A certain man had an infirmity for 38 years. We don't know if he had been at this pool for all 38 years but he had been there for a long time. All the time he was there, he was waiting on the water. If the circumstance ever got just right, he would get his healing. The water didn't move every day but it did on occasion. And when it did, someone got their healing. And then they went back to waiting on the water.

One day Jesus showed up and said unto him, "Rise, take up thy bed and walk." This man now had a choice. If he waited long enough, the water would eventually move and he might have a chance of getting in the water. Or he could believe the Man now and start walking in His Word. This man made the correct choice. He took up his bed and walked. Either method of his healing would be performed by the power of God but **his actions hastened his healing.** His instant faith in the Words of Christ caused his immediate healing.

I have met many who are waiting for the circumstances to get just right to get what they need from God. If the right preacher came by with the right revival, they would get the Holy Ghost. If conviction fell just right, they would repent. If a certain preacher would anoint them with oil, they could believe to be healed. They are spending their time waiting on the water. But we don't have to wait for the environment to be perfect. Jesus has given His Word. The promise of the Holy Ghost is to you and your children. You can have it today by obedience to His Word. He said that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. You don't have to be at a campmeeting to be saved. You can be saved at home, right now, if you repent. The Bible says that the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up. You don't have to wait to be healed. You can believe the Words of Jesus and be healed without ever being in a prayer line. Here is the secret: **"Stop waiting on the water and start walking in His Word."**

Matthew J. Stone

March 3, 2024



The Power of the Cross

Theme: We must never forget the power of the cross for the sacrifice made there paid the price for the sin of the world. We must always preach Christ crucified.

Golden Text: "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God." (1 Cor. 1:18)

Scripture Reading for the Lesson - 1 Corinthians 1:18-28

18 For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

19 For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.

20 Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?

21 For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

22 For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom:

23 But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock,

and unto the Greeks foolishness;

24 But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

26 For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:

27 But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;

28. And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:

Introduction

Today we begin a study of Paul's epistles to the Corinthian Church. The city of Corinth was a center of commerce and also a very wicked city. When Paul first arrived there, he met Aquila and Priscilla who were Jews who had moved to Corinth from Rome. He lived and worked with them as he began his ministry in Corinth. Paul started by reasoning with the Jews in the synagogue on the Sabbath day concerning Christ. When many of them arose in fury against him, he left teaching in the synagogue and began having services in the home of Justus. God spoke to Paul in a vision and encouraged him to "be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: for I am with thee . . . and I have much people in this city." When Paul wrote 1 Corinthians it was to correct disorders that existed there and to answer questions they had sent to him.

Exposition of Today's Lesson

I. Greeting and Thanksgiving

1 Corinthians 1:1-9

Paul begins this epistle with a greeting to "the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints." He gives thanks to God for the grace they had received and states that their testimony has confirmed what God had done among them. He reminds them that our ultimate goal is to be blameless at the coming of the Lord and that God is faithful to keep us by his power.

II. Division in the Church

1 Corinthians 1:10-17

Paul explains that he has heard from fellow Christians that there have been contentions among the Corinthians. He refers to them twice as "brethren" as he tells them of what he has heard about them. His calling them brothers serves at least two purposes:

1) it softens the rebuke. It reminds them that Paul is not their enemy but their brother.

2) the very use of the word "brethren" shows them how wrong their divisions and contentions are.

A. Those Claiming Paul

Some of the Corinthian believers were gathering together in their own little group and boasting, "We are of Paul." Probably these were mainly the Gentiles who had been converted under the ministry of Paul when the Corinthian church first began. It is natural for a person to have a special place in his heart for the one that was responsible for his coming to the Lord and being saved, but this was a fleshly boasting meant to lift themselves above others who had not been saved under Paul's preaching.

B. Those Claiming Apollos

Others began boasting, "I am of Apollos." Apollos was a Jew of Alexandria and was described in Acts 18 as an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures. He was preaching the baptism of John when Aquila met him and invited him to his home. There Apollos was instructed more perfectly in the word of the Lord and went his way preaching the gospel. He came and preached in Corinth after Paul had left to go to Ephesus.

Alexandria was the center of the intellectual community and it is possible that those claiming Apollos were emphasizing the intellect of man in regard to Christianity. At any rate, they had segregated into their own exclusive group.

C. Those Claiming Peter

There is no Bible proof that Peter ever actually preached at the Corinthian church. This group was probably made up of Jewish believers who held to the necessity of observing Jewish law, and felt that Peter was "their" apostle who sympathized with their position.

D. Those Claiming Christ

It is possible that there were a few who refused to be taken into the other divisions and maintained their dependence upon Christ. It is also possible that this was a group with an attitude of self-righteousness, "Well, you may be of Paul, Apollos, or Peter, but **we** are of Christ." They would not be wrong for claiming to belong to Christ. What would have been wrong was an attitude claiming that Christ belonged to them.

While this may not be the specific cause of division in our churches today, we must admit that our Holiness movement has had some rather ridicu-

lous contentions in its churches. When churches fight among themselves and even split apart over such trivial things as carpet colors, light fixtures, padded or un-padded pews, who does or does not get a key, the volume of the PA system and a host of other such nonsense, we have shown the world and other Christians just how unspiritual we really are. Some poor souls have deceived themselves into thinking that the local church is **their** church. Their spouse, or parent started it years ago and they feel that they are part of a "royal line of descendants" who are entitled to exert their authority over the church regardless of who God sends to be the pastor. Oh, how God must grieve over our silly divisions and contentions.

13. Is Christ divided?

It is possible that Jesus has more than one body? Can it be that he has one body in Virginia, another in Oklahoma, another in Alabama and so on? Certainly not. Christ is the head of **the Church**. There is only one church, one body of true believers in this world. By necessity we must have numbers of local churches so we can each be an effective part of the whole. But while we are divided up into local congregations, we must never forget that this is not **our church**, it is **God's church** and need to be concerned that what we do is pleasing to Him.

13. Was Paul crucified for you?

Respect for founders, leaders and pastors is proper and necessary. But when our devotion to a person exceeds our devotion to God and his will for the church, we have crossed the line of respect and submission to authority and become idolaters. As great as Brother So and So was, he was not our Savior; he did not die for our sins. He was not God in the flesh.

14. I baptized none of you

Paul was very upset about the divi-

sions in the Corinthian church. He did not feel flattered that a certain group had taken him as its hero. He did not need a fan club to boost his ego. He was angry and grieved that people could be so carnal and spiritually blind. He told them that he was glad that he didn't baptize them so that they did not think he was baptizing people in **his own name**.

III. Preaching the Cross

1 Corinthians 1:18-31

Paul rebuked their contention and division and began to show them the nature and message of the true church. The central theme of the church must always be Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Certainly there are points of doctrine that must be taught and preached to believers but without the foundation of salvation through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary, all other doctrine is in vain.

18. To them that perish foolishness

Those who are lost without God in this world do not understand the importance of the cross. To many of them, it is just another religious symbol for use as a piece of jewelry. The actual crucifixion and death of Jesus is meaningless to them and they think it is foolish for us to preach about it.

18. It is the power of God

That which the world considers foolishness is actually the greatest demonstration of the power of God that the world has ever known. The creation of the world was a demonstration of tremendous power; the flood over all the earth was also a demonstration of great power. But when God sent his Son from the glory of Heaven to suffer and die on earth as the payment for the sin of the world, it was the greatest demonstration of power possible. Just think, sin had reigned from Adam throughout the entire human race. Death by sin had dominion over all

souls born into the world. Satan felt that all the earth was under his control and there was nothing man could do to save himself. However, God sent his son to save mankind. This was certainly not the way man would have done it. This didn't make sense to the human mind. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! (Rom.11:33)

A. To the Jews a Stumblingblock

The preaching of the cross was a stumblingblock to the Jews for at least two reasons:

1) It was incredible to the Jew that one who died on a cross could be the Messiah. It was stated in the law, "for he that is hanged is accursed of God." (Deut.21:23) It was too much for the human mind to accept that Jesus could possibly be the Messiah after such a disgraceful death.

2) The Jews sought for signs. The Jewish people as a whole were looking for a Messiah to come who would perform startling wonders and signs. They would only be convinced by a dramatic display of power. They especially wanted to see power used against the Roman oppression and rule they were under. When Jesus came in a manner that he himself described as "meek and lowly," they could not believe him to be their Messiah. He deliberately avoided the sensational and spectacular. Even when tempted by Satan to leap from the pinnacle of the Temple, he steadfastly refused and remained committed to God's plan of salvation. Though he did many mighty miracles for the common man, the Jews would not receive him. The cross was a stumblingblock.

B. To the Greeks Foolishness

1) The Greeks believed the gods to

be incapable of feeling, so that no one could ever touch or affect God.

2) They also believed the gods were totally detached from man and the idea of the incarnation (God becoming man) was silly and revolting to them.

3) They sought human wisdom and gloried in the cunning mind and nimble tongue. The Christian preacher seemed crude to them.

25. Foolishness of God is wiser

What to God would be counted foolishness is so deep to man that he could never figure it out. Men often feel that they have advanced intellectually to the place that the Bible and spiritual things are below them. They are "ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." Praise God that his thoughts are higher than our thoughts and his ways are higher than our ways. Praise God for the Cross.



When Nansen was looking for the North Pole, he found himself in very deep water. He took a sounding but his line wouldn't reach bottom. He wrote in his book the length of line and beside it "deeper than that." The next day he lengthened the line and again it was too short. He wrote the length and "deeper than that." He gathered all the line on the ship and it still did not reach bottom. He recorded the length of this longest line and added "deeper than that." So it is with the grace of God in the cross of Jesus Christ.

Through all the depth of sin and loss,
Drops the plummet of the cross;
Never yet abyss was found,
Deeper than the cross could sound.

Daily Bible Reading for this Week:			
Sun	<input type="checkbox"/> . . . Num. 9-11	<input type="checkbox"/> . . Mk. 5:1-20	Wed <input type="checkbox"/> . Num. 20-22 <input type="checkbox"/> . . Mk. 7:1-13
Mon	<input type="checkbox"/> . Num. 12-15	<input type="checkbox"/> . Mk. 5:21-43	Thur <input type="checkbox"/> . Num. 23-25 <input type="checkbox"/> . Mk. 7:14-37
Tues	<input type="checkbox"/> . Num. 16-19	<input type="checkbox"/> Mk. 6	Fri <input type="checkbox"/> . Num. 26-27 <input type="checkbox"/> . . Mk. 8:1-21
			Sat <input type="checkbox"/> . Num. 28-30 <input type="checkbox"/> . Mk. 8:22-38

March 10, 2024

Lesson
2

The Curse of Carnality

Theme: Carnality is a curse to an individual and to the church body. It is a hindrance to receiving truth and a hindrance to working for God.

Golden Text: *"For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace."* (Romans 8:6)

Scripture Reading for the Lesson - 1 Corinthians 3:1-11

1 And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.

2 I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.

3 For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?

4 For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?

5 Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?

6 I have planted, Apollos watered;

but God gave the increase.

7 So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.

8 Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.

9 For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.

10 According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.

11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

Introduction

In our last lesson Paul reproved the Corinthians concerning the divisions that had developed among them and reminded them that the preaching of the cross is to be the central theme of the Church and its ministry. In 1 Corinthians 2, Paul told them that he came not in excellency of speech but in the demonstration of the Spirit and of power. He spoke to them concerning the spiritual man and the natural man, instructing them that the natural man cannot receive the things of God for they are spiritually discerned. How important it is that we be spiritual men and women: not just church members, not just professing Christians, but spiritual people! Spiritual people are able to receive from God and understand the things of the Lord. Spiritual people focus on God and his Spirit, not on human wisdom and ability. When we focus on the human aspect, we end up with jealousy, envy, strife, and carnality.

Exposition of Today's Lesson

I. Carnality Condemned

(1 Corinthians 3:1-5)

A. Carnality halts Spiritual growth

Paul plainly tells the Corinthians that he could not teach them as though they were spiritual Christians, because they were still babes in Christ. Why were they still babes? Had they not been saved long enough to experience growth? Were they new converts? No.

While there may have been some new converts among them, most of them had been saved for some years. The reason they had not grown spiritually was that they were carnal. The word carnal means: regarding the flesh as opposed to the Spirit; concern about temporal earthly things. When we give priority to earthly, temporal matters, we do not grow spiritually. God is aware of our physical needs: food, clothing, shelter etc. He has instructed us, "*Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.*" (Matthew 6:33)

Too many of us are minding earthly things instead of spiritual things and are restricted in our spiritual growth. We allow this world and its system to dominate our thinking and our actions and then wonder why we do not experience great spiritual power in our life.

B. Carnality hinders reception of truth

Paul told these believers that he had fed them with milk and not meat because they were not able to receive it. People who are wrapped up in temporal, earthly things do not have much of a spiritual appetite. Many in our congregations barely understand the fundamentals and seem to have no grasp (and no desire to grasp) deeper truth. We spend too much of our time deal-

ing with things that should have already been accepted and settled in our hearts and minds. If the preacher is not amusing or entertaining, we are bored even if he is giving solid teaching from God's Word. The focus has shifted from the message to the delivery in to many cases. The writer to the Hebrews described his readers as being "dull of hearing." "*For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.*" (Heb.5:12)

C. Carnality causes Strife

If the lack of spiritual growth and the loss of spiritual appetite are not enough to prove the existence of carnality, the presence of strife and divisions will provide the final proof. Some absolutely refuse to admit that they are carnal and become angry if anyone suggests they are, but they are constantly involved in strife and division. Some churches have been hindered and hurt beyond measure by the envying and competition among their members. Selfishness has become an epidemic in many churches. If some people are not pampered and pleased, they will just "take their toys and go home." God must be angered and grieved by the petty matters that cause such division in local churches. We are not in competition with each other; we are supposed to be working together.

II. Cooperation Needed

(1 Corinthians 3:6-10)

A. We are Laborers Together

It is easy for us to forget that all believers, teachers, and ministers are to work together in God's kingdom. "*There is one body, and one Spirit,*

. . . *one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all,*"(Eph.4:4-6) We must remember that all believers are part of the same body, the Body of Christ. We have many local assemblies because it would be physically impossible for everyone to attend the same church. When our view gets too narrow, we only see **our church**. Then our view narrows even more and we see only **ourselves**. If we cannot rejoice that God has used our brother or sister to sing, testify, or teach, then we have forgotten that we are laborers together. Every time someone is healed, saved, or filled with the Holy Ghost, we all benefit regardless of who was used by the Lord to do the work.

B. We have Different Duties

Paul said, "I have planted, Apollos has watered; but God gave the increase." Every believer has a work to do in God's kingdom. We do not all preach, or teach, or sing, or evangelize, but we all have something we can do. No one person can do all of God's work; it takes all of us together. The glory for what is done is not ours but God's. We do what we can do but it is God who gives the increase. When we work in cooperation instead of in competition we can see so much more accomplished.

III. Cautions Given

(1 Corinthians 3:10-17)

A. Caution regarding our Building

While we are working together for God, there are some things we must be careful about. God's work must be done in accordance with God's will and in God's way. We are told to "take heed" how we build. This caution is two-fold:

1) The Foundation - Paul makes it clear that there is no other foundation acceptable than the foundation of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the "chief cornerstone" of this spiritual building.

There are those who attempt to replace Jesus with some other foundation. When Jesus Christ is not the basis and foundation for our work, we have made a terrible mistake and are doomed for failure.

2) The Materials - Just as the foundation is important, so are the materials that are used in the building. There are different kinds of materials mentioned by Paul and they fall into two categories: 1. gold, silver, precious stones, and 2. wood, hay and stubble.

13. Man's work shall be manifest

There is going to be a day of judgement for all believers. It is the Judgement Seat of Christ. This is not a judgement of whether someone is saved or lost. Only those who are saved will be at this judgement. It is rather a testing of the works of our Christian life to see if they were of the proper materials.

13. It shall be revealed by fire

Our works will be tested by God's fire and only those done for his kingdom and for the right motive will remain. Anything done for selfish motives or self benefit will be burned up. Every deed done from a heart of love and devotion to God and others will receive a reward. We must be careful that we do what is right and that we do it for the right motive. For example, if we make a donation to our church but only so others will be impressed by our generosity, we built with wood, hay, and stubble and it will not stand the test of fire. On the other hand, just giving someone a drink of cold water in the name of the Lord will bring a reward. (Mat.10:42)

B. Caution regarding our Bodies

Paul reminds us that we must not only be careful about the work we do for God and his kingdom, but we must also be careful about our personal life. Some worry more about what they can do than they do about who they are.

God is concerned about what we do for him but he is also quite concerned about the integrity of our character.

16. Ye are the temple of God

"Know ye not?" Are you aware of the fact that you are the temple of God? Do you realize that God's Spirit dwells within the believer? My, what a sobering thought! In the Old Testament God's presence dwelt in a temple made of stone and mortar. Yet that temple had to be purified and sanctified. How much more must our living temples be pure and holy dwelling places for God's Holy Ghost!

17. If any defile the temple

We are made holy not by our own righteousness, but by the righteousness of Christ. He alone can cleanse from sin and make the heart pure. After we are saved and purified by God's Spirit, we must maintain our purity by the indwelling of His Spirit and by our separation from the world. We can defile the temple by allowing worldly or sinful things to enter our mind or heart. The Lord does not tolerate evil in his temple. The warning is clear. Any one who defiles the temple will be punished by God with destruction. Before my works can be holy, my life must be holy. *"Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me and know my thoughts: see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."* (Ps.139:23, 24)

IV. Conceit Forbidden

(1 Corinthians 3:18-23)

Paul concludes this chapter by exhorting us not to be deceived by worldly conceit. The conceited of this world like to think that they have perfected knowledge and wisdom. They

glory in technology, computer science, medical research, etc. and trust wholly in their own wisdom and ability. Paul reminds us that the wisdom of men is foolishness with God.

21. Let no man glory in men

We should respect each other and give proper honor to those who are in positions of leadership, but we should never elevate man above his true place. If we glory in man we will fall when man falls. If we glory in God and honor man, we will feel hurt when man falls but we will still be anchored in a faithful God.



Daniel Webster met with a company of gentlemen of high position and intelligence and one asked him, "What is the greatest thought that you ever had?" He replied, "The greatest thought that ever came to me was my personal responsibility to Almighty God."

Dr. Benjamin Jowett was asked, "Dr., what do you think of God?" "Madam," came the reply, "the important thing is not what I think of God, but what he thinks of me."

One of the great artists stood before the work of another artist whose talents were superior to his own. Instead of being filled with jealousy as he surveyed the beautiful work which so fully expressed ideas which he himself had not been able to realize, he exclaimed, "I, too am a painter!" Oh, that we would rejoice when someone excels in ministry or Christian life instead of feeling jealous and criticizing them.

Daily Bible Reading for this Week:

Sun .. Num 31-33 ... Mk 9.1-29
Mon .. Num 34-36 .. Mk 9:30-50
Tues Deut 1-2 .. Mk 10:1-31

Wed Deut 3-4 . Mk 10:32-52
Thur Deut 5-7 .. Mk 11:1-18
Fri Deut 8-10 . Mk 11:19-33
Sat .. Deut 11-13 .. Mk 12:1-27

March 17, 2024

Lesson
3

Problems in the Church

Theme: When there are problems in the church, they must be dealt with in a Scriptural manner. God will not tolerate wilful disobedience to his Word.

Golden Text: *"And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed."* (2 Th 3:14)

Scripture Reading for the Lesson - 1 Corinthians 5:1-8; 6:1-3

5:1 It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife.

2 And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you.

3 For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed,

4 In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ,

5 To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

6 Your glorying is not good. Know

ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?

7 Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:

8 Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

6:1 Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints?

2 Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?

3 Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?

Introduction

Paul had heard of some problems in the Corinthian Church that needed to be corrected. He, as an apostle of God, exercised his authority to give direction and commands to these believers. In our church world, the authority of the man of God has been largely denied and ignored. We all know that not every man who calls himself a minister has actually been called and equipped by God, but there are men who obviously are God-called, Spirit led, and Holy Ghost anointed. It is time for the true men of God in our churches to rise up and boldly proclaim the living and powerful Word of God while denouncing sin and evil. It is also time for sincere believers to heed the ministry of the man of God and instead of fighting against the truth, to submit to it and obey it.

Exposition of Today's Lesson

I. A Case of Immorality

(1 Corinthians 5:1-13)

A. Actual Case Described

The problem in this church was not a secret or hidden one. It was known by many in the church and had even been talked about outside of the church. This case had become common knowledge around the church and local community. Paul had not even been there recently and he had also heard about it.

It is interesting, and sadly so, to see how we Christians react when there is some problem in our church. It is often talked about all around the membership and even around the fellowship, but never dealt with scripturally. The sin of gossip and slander has been added many times to an already existing sin and only further complicated the whole matter.

Paul describes the existing sin as fornication. The word fornication is used to refer to unlawful sexual acts including prostitution, incest, and relations between unmarried individuals. This is a horrible indictment that there was fornication in the church. Paul describes it as such a despicable sin, that even the Gentiles avoid it and count it as evil. There was a man in the church, who is called a brother, and evidently claims to be a Christian, who has taken his father's wife. There is some debate as to whether or not she is his actual mother or a step-mother, but the end result is the same. It was an abomination to God. Under the Old Testament law both of them would have been put to death.

B. Their Attitude Condemned

Paul rebukes the believers in the church for the attitude they have shown in the midst of this situation.

Paul tells them that they "are puffed up, and have not mourned." Instead of feeling great sorrow over this horrible sin, and mourning before God concerning it, they feel proud that they have allowed these people to continue in the church. They have been "tolerant" and they are proud of themselves. Of course, they have talked about it to everyone else but they haven't been willing to confront the transgressor and deal with the sin.

Paul says to them in verse 7, "your glorying is not good." They should have felt great shame that this was happening among them; but they were glorying that they were not being "judgmental." Oh, how our attitudes get twisted and reversed. When we should be patient and longsuffering with those who are trying hard to serve the Lord, we often pick at them over trivial things and cause them to be discouraged. On the other hand, when gross sin is present we often pamper the perpetrator and become angry if the pastor deals strongly with the sin. We must have a proper attitude about sin, especially in the context of the church.

C. Action Commanded

When Paul concluded his rebuke of their attitude, he gave commands concerning the proper action that needs to be taken in this matter.

Paul makes it clear that he has already judged what needs to be done in this matter and expects the believers to carry out his commands. The first command is that they put him out of their local church. (5:2) They cannot allow this man to continue as a member of good standing in the church. He had committed fornication and yet claimed to be a Christian. Church discipline has become extinct in most

churches in our day, including holiness churches. There is a wrong way and a right way to handle these things. These believers were going to one extreme by allowing him to continue in the church in spite of his open sin. Some believers go to the other extreme when with a hateful, self-righteous spirit they start a campaign among other members against the one they view at fault. Let me interject here that many of our attacks are not directed at people who are undoubtedly guilty of sin, but at someone we do not agree with or are suspicious of. However, when there is obvious, open sin, it should not be allowed to continue without the church taking action. Jesus gave the basic principles for dealing with a person who is sinning in Matthew 18:15-18.

"Deliver him to Satan." This statement has presented some difficulty for Bible students. It seems that Paul is reminding the Corinthian church that they have the **authority** and the **duty** to deal with this sin. God has granted his body of believers the authority to stand for righteousness and holiness in the local church. They are instructed to have a meeting *"in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ."* (5:4)

They are then to take official action concerning this case. What they are to do is to publicly state the charges against this man and state plainly that he is no longer a member of this church. He is now no longer able to hide behind his church membership and affiliation as justification of his sin. He is declared to be a servant of the devil, which in reality he has already been for some time. Now they are removing the cloak of respectability from this gross sin and they are removing any spiritual protection he has benefitted from by being part of their church. He is now

given over to Satan's power which may bring suffering and even death, that he might learn to repent of his sin and find forgiveness and pardon through the blood of Jesus Christ.

Remember, it is not the intention of church discipline to condemn any soul to hell, but rather to cause them to see the exceeding sinfulness of sin and turn from evil to Christ. If the sin is allowed to continue unchallenged, the sinner will feel safe and go right on sinning and claiming to be a Christian. Then when he dies and goes to hell, it is too late for repentance. If the sin is dealt with by the church, the sinner may repent and be saved. He may refuse to repent and will have to suffer the consequences of his own decision, but he will not be able to blame the church for his eternal punishment.

"Do not company with him." Paul does not mince words in this matter; believers are not to have close association with anyone who calls himself a "brother" but is living in sin. We are not to avoid someone and refuse to speak to him just because he is not saved. We will never reach the lost without some contact with them. But there is a difference between casual acquaintance with common courtesy and being "yoked" in friendship and association with sinners. Here the instruction is not specifically about our association with the lost in the world, but our association with someone in the church who claims the name of Christ but has sin in his life.

II. Concerning Going to Court

(1 Corinthians 6:1-11)

Paul doesn't approach the subject gradually; he gets right to the point and says, "Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the

saints." My, in this day of sue, sue, sue, these words seem almost alien. These instructions are needed in our church world today.

A. Judgement made by the church

Paul obviously is talking about a believer who has a disagreement with another believer. We cannot put these principles in practice when dealing with unsaved people. They certainly will not submit to the authority of the church or of God. But, when believers have differences, they are told that judgment should be made by the church. Lest anyone should quickly protest that those in the church are not qualified to judge such matters Paul informs us on 2 points:

1. Saints shall judge the world.

2. Saints shall judge angels.

These saints are reminded that they will assist Jesus Christ in ruling and reigning in the world to come. Therefore, if they are considered by Christ to be worthy of such an honor, they must certainly be able to judge matters of this present life.

B. Judgement not by unbelievers

1. They are ungodly

When we take matters into the courts of the land, we are putting the judgement into hands of unsaved men and women who are not guided by godly principles. How can they make proper decisions regarding believers when they are not instructed in God's Word?

2. It is a poor testimony

When we go to court with a fellow believer, it causes the church to be reproached in the eyes of the world. "Oh yeah, they act so holy and they can't even get along." You've probably heard someone say something like that. There was

a church in my hometown that went to court over whether the current pastor would be able to remain or be forced to go. It made front page headlines. A church that can't peaceably decide about a pastor? What a reproach!

3. It causes a brother to be defrauded

When one takes advantage of a "brother" or a church, or a ministry, even through the legal system, they have become unrighteous; and the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God. (verses 8 & 9)

We are instructed that it is better to allow ourselves to be defrauded, or wronged, than to take a believer to court. We do not give God's people enough credit. There are some who are walking in the Spirit and seeking the face of God; we would be wise to seek their counsel and heed their wisdom.



Theodore Cuyler said, "The fear of man makes us cowards. The fear of God makes the righteous bold as a lion. Jesus was the meekest of all men, yet his courage never flinched. How he scathed the scoundrel Pharisees with his teaching. His apostles were gentle men, yet over and over again we read that they 'spake the word of God with boldness.' Shame on us that we so often conceal, or muffle the edge of God's truth when it is merely a question of popularity or pay. We cheat ourselves when we play the coward, for nothing "pays" better in the long run than faithfulness to truth and conscience."

Daily Bible Reading for this Week:			
Sun	<input type="checkbox"/> .. Deut 14-16	<input type="checkbox"/> . Mk 12:28-44	Wed <input type="checkbox"/> . Deut. 23-25 <input type="checkbox"/> . Mk. 14:1-26
Mon	<input type="checkbox"/> .. Deut 17-19	<input type="checkbox"/> .. Mk 13:1-20	Thur <input type="checkbox"/> . Deut. 26-27 <input type="checkbox"/> Mk. 14:27-53
Tues	<input type="checkbox"/> .. Deut 20-22	<input type="checkbox"/> . Mk 13:21-37	Fri <input type="checkbox"/> . Deut. 28-29 <input type="checkbox"/> Mk. 14:54-72
			Sat <input type="checkbox"/> . Deut. 30-31 <input type="checkbox"/> . Mk. 15:1-25

March 24, 2024



Till Death Do Us Part

Theme: The Bible is not silent about the subject of marriage. Society does not follow God's principles, but they are still true and are to be obeyed.

Golden Text: "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." (Gen. 2:24)

Scripture Reading for the Lesson - 1 Corinthians 7:1-3, 10-16

1 Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman.

2 Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.

3 Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband.

10 And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband:

11 But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife.

12 But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be

pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away.

13 And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him.

14 For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.

15 But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace.

16 For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?

Introduction

The subject of this lesson is a vital one for us today. It is in some respects a controversial subject not only in the world, but also in the Church. What we must do is this: we must study what God says about marriage and not be ruled by our own opinion or our sympathetic feelings. If God's Word is absolute truth in regard to salvation, sin, holiness, healing, the baptism of the Holy Ghost, etc, it is also the truth about marriage. This becomes such a personal subject that people are sometimes offended by the plain presentation of what the Bible says about it. This lesson is primarily presented to prevent divorce among those who have not yet married or those who are currently married. We will not try to solve every possible problem in regard to divorce; we will present the Biblical principles involved.

Exposition of Today's Lesson

I. God Institutes Marriage

It is important to note that man did not conceive the institution of marriage. God did. It was God who deemed it necessary and brought about its beginning. It was also God who gave the principles and guidelines for marriage.

A. One Man and One Woman

It seems quite elementary to make this point, but it is a necessary part of marriage the way God intended it. God created man in His own image and placed him in the garden of Eden to "dress it and keep it." It was God who said that it was not good for man to be alone and He decided to make a helpmeet for man. God created Eve from one of Adam's ribs and brought her to him. It was here that woman was declared to be flesh of man's flesh and bone of man's bone. Genesis 2:24 states the heavenly purpose of marriage - "*Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.*" God made one man, then one woman for the one man. It is clear that God never intended for a man to have more than one living wife. It is also clear that God never left room for the "marriage" of man to man or woman to woman; homosexuality is an abomination to God.

In 1 Corinthians chapter 7, Paul begins to address some of the questions he had received from the church. He tells them plainly that it is "good for a man not to touch a woman." This is not well received in many of our churches today, especially among the youth who are so busy "dating" they have little time for the things of God. The reason for this strong statement is very clear: a man should not touch in a

lustful manner a woman that he is not married to because it leads to fornication. God made us to be attracted to the opposite sex; that is part of the institution of marriage. The problem is that man has tried to do away with the "restraint" of marriage in pursuing his fleshly desires. Young man, keep your hands off the lady. She is not yours to touch in a sexual manner until you follow God's principles and say "I do." God joins man and woman together as one in His holy institution of marriage.

B. Marriage Is for Life

God's plan for marriage was for one man to be married to one woman, **for life**. Scripture is very clear on this point: marriage is a covenant for life. In Malachi 2:14, God describes the wife as "thy companion, the wife of thy covenant." Marriage is a covenant between the man and the woman, and it is a covenant between the couple and God. Even when people change the spoken vows in their ceremony, they do not change the covenant with God. They may not say "till death do us part," but whenever and wherever a marriage takes place, it is still a covenant with God and is governed by God's rules. Romans 7:2 - "*The woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband.*"

II. God Hates Divorce

We are going to look at the passages in scripture which deal with divorce.

Malachi 2:14-16

We have already quoted the statement from these verses concerning marriage being a covenant. Now we look at verse 16 which says, "*The*

Lord, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away." These are very strong words: God hates divorce. He has already rebuked the men of Israel for dealing "treacherously" with the "wife of his youth." God is angry that these men have broken their covenant with God and with their wife. He wants them to understand that He does not condone what they are doing; he hates divorce. We have been so affected by the world's philosophy that we do not feel the anger of God and his hatred of divorce. We have made it an escape hatch from any relationship that does not totally "please" us. Can we condone what God hates?

Mark 10:2-12

Remember that each of the gospels was written to a specific group of people. Later all four gospels were gathered together to make up part of the New Testament. Mark was originally written to the Romans. In these verses the Pharisees came to Jesus trying to trap him in his words. They asked him, "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife?" Jesus first asks them what Moses commanded and they replied that he allowed a bill of divorcement to be written by the husband as he put away his wife. There are still some today who try to use this incident which is found in Deuteronomy 24:1-4 to justify their divorce. But Jesus' words to the Pharisee show clearly that what was allowed by Moses was not the plan of God. *"For the hardness of your heart he (Moses) wrote you this precept. But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. And they twain (two) shall be one flesh: what God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."* God instituted marriage, but **God did not institute divorce.** When the disciples asked Jesus again concerning this matter, Jesus said, *"Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth*

adultery against her. And if a woman shall put away her husband and be married to another, she committeth adultery."

Luke 16:18

Luke was the gospel written to the Greeks. This verse is the only one in the book of Luke that deals with this subject. Jesus said, *"Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery."* These words restate what was written in Mark and also say that one who marries a divorced person commits adultery.

Romans 7:1-3

We have already quoted verse 2 concerning death as the end of the marriage covenant. We now look at verse 3 which states, *"if while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress though she be married to another man."* This clearly coincides with the teaching of Jesus in the previous two passages.

1 Corinthians 7:10-16

We come now to our lesson text. It is interesting to note that four specific times Paul states there is to be **no divorce.** In verse 10, *"let not the wife depart from her husband."* In verse 11, *"let not the husband put away his wife."* In verse 12, *"let him not put her away."* In verse 13, *"let her not leave him."* The message is clear: God hates divorce.

"What if I am married to an unsaved person? Am I not allowed to divorce him? Shouldn't I marry another person who is a Christian so we can serve God together?" There is a simple answer to these questions, NO. Paul states that if the unbeliever is content to live with you in a proper marriage

relationship, you are not to pursue divorce. "But what if the unbeliever decides to divorce the believer?" That sometimes does happen and Paul addressed the matter clearly. If one partner insists on divorce and breaks the marriage apart, then they each have 2 options available to them: 1) They must remain unmarried or 2) They must be reconciled to each other. There is no license given to either spouse to marry another person, regardless of who claims to be "the innocent party" in the divorce.

Some wonder about the phrase, "not under bondage in such cases," and take it to mean that if your spouse takes the initiative to divorce you, then you are allowed to remarry, for you are not "under bondage." This is far from the meaning when you take it in its context. Paul has already stated 4 times, No divorce. He is not discussing remarriage primarily, he is discussing divorce. Therefore, we are commanded to do everything within our power to keep the marriage together. If all fails and our spouse insists on divorce, we are not under bondage to continue striving to keep the marriage together. In such a case, however, Paul has already given the options that now exist for the divorced persons: to remain unmarried or be reconciled to each other.

In verse 39 Paul reiterates the fact that death alone dissolves the marriage covenant.

Matthew 5:31,32; 19: 1-11

We will look lastly at the passages in Matthew's gospel which was written specifically to the Jews. Matthew 19 is a parallel passage to Mark 10 which we discussed earlier. It differs in two ways from Mark 10:

Daily Bible Reading for this Week:

Sun ☐ . Deut. 32-34 ☐ Mk. 15:26-47
 Mon ☐ . . . Josh. 1-3 ☐ Mk. 16
 Tues ☐ . . . Josh. 4-6 ☐ . . . Lk. 1:1-20

1) It does not make mention of the wife divorcing the husband for this was unheard of among the Jews and was not allowed.

2) It contains what is known as the "exception clause"- "except it be for fornication." There are many opinions as to what is meant by that phrase. We will mention the 3 most common:

1) Adultery - This view states that if your spouse is unfaithful to you and commits adultery, then you have the right to divorce them and remarry. There are numerous objections to this view:

1. It was no higher of a standard than the Pharisee's teachings.
2. It contradicts Mark, Luke, and Paul who gave absolutely no exceptions.
3. If Jesus meant adultery why didn't he just say it? The word adultery is a totally different word in the Greek language and it is used in the same verse at times alongside the word fornication.

2) Spiritual fornication - Some still say that if you are married to an unbeliever, you are in spiritual fornication and are therefore allowed to divorce the unbeliever and remarry a Christian. We have already seen Paul's answer to this.

3) Betrothal period - This view is that Jesus was referring to the Jewish custom of a betrothal period before the actual marriage. If during this betrothal, either the man or woman had relations with another person, the other partner could divorce the unfaithful one and could still enter into a marriage without breaking God's law. This view complements all the other scripture concerning the subject and does not contradict them. Once a marriage is legally and physically consummated, there is no provision for divorce to occur.

Wed ☐ . . . Josh. 7-9 ☐ . . Lk. 1:21-38
 Thur ☐ . Josh. 10-12 ☐ . . Lk. 1:39-56
 Fri ☐ . Josh. 13-15 ☐ . . Lk. 1:57-80
 Sat ☐ . Josh. 16-18 ☐ . . . Lk. 2:1-24

March 31, 2024



The Resurrection of the Dead

Theme: The resurrection of the dead to life eternal is a most blessed teaching of the Scriptures. It brings us hope and comfort, and motivates us to carry on.

Golden Text: "Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:" (John 11:25)

Scripture Reading for the Lesson - 1 Cor. 15:3-8, 12-19

3 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;

4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:

5 And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve:

6 After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep.

7 After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles.

8 And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.

12 Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrec-

tion of the dead?

13 But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen:

14 And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.

15 Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not.

16 For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised:

17 And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.

18 Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.

19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

Introduction

The fifteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians is full of glorious truth. It contains a thorough, logical and unanswerable argument for the main truth of Christianity: the resurrection of Christ and of believers. It is evident from vs. 12 that the important doctrine of the resurrection had been denied at Corinth, and that this error had gained footing in the church. The origin of this error is not known, but it may have come from the influence of the Jewish sect of the Saducees who denied the resurrection. It also may have come from the Greek philosophy of that day as we find in Acts 17:32 that some of them considered the idea of a resurrection to be ridiculous. Others, according to 2 Tim. 2:18 taught that the resurrection was already past. Paul writes then to answer these false teachings.

Exposition of Today's Lesson

I. Certainty of Resurrection

We have mentioned the error that existed in the church at Corinth concerning the resurrection. They were not denying that Christ had risen from the dead in particular, but that there would be no resurrection of the dead. Paul begins his discussion of this subject by affirming the certainty of the resurrection. He makes these three points to prove that there will be a resurrection of the dead.

A. Christ is Risen (1-11)

The first and foremost proof that there is a resurrection of the dead is the fact of Christ's resurrection. This truth is the keystone of the apostles' message. They constantly and earnestly affirmed that Jesus had indeed risen from the dead proving that he was truly the Christ, the Messiah.

Paul gives two proofs to support his belief in the resurrection of Christ:

1) The Scriptures

Paul states that he had preached only what he had received from God: that Jesus died for sins, was buried, and rose again "according to the scriptures." There are references in the Old Testament that speak of the resurrection of Christ, as well as the words of Jesus himself while he walked with his disciples. They did not seem to understand the prophecies of his resurrection, but in Luke 24:27 Jesus began "at Moses and all the prophets" and "expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself." We do not have space to detail the fulfillment of all Scriptural prophecy; but it is sufficient to say that literally hundreds of prophecies have already been fulfilled beyond the shadow of doubt. When God said it, he meant it. Paul said that the scriptures are proof that Jesus

rose from the dead.

2) The Eyewitnesses

Paul proceeds to list a number of eyewitnesses who saw Jesus alive after his resurrection. He was seen of Peter first, then of all the disciples together. He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, by James his brother, by all the disciples, and by Paul on the road to Damascus. These people saw the Lord, talked to him, and some even ate with him. They knew for a fact that he was alive. They also knew that it was really Jesus because he showed them the scars in his hands, feet, and side. It was not someone else pretending to be the risen Jesus, it was Jesus himself, alive and glorified with immortality. These men stood to gain nothing by lying and making up some fantastic story. What they got for proclaiming Jesus' resurrection was persecution and death. They believed it because they had seen him for themselves and we can accept their testimony without reservation.

B. Consequences of No Resurrection

Paul next tells what the consequences would be if it were true that there was no resurrection of the dead.

1) Christ did not rise

If you deny the resurrection in general, you have denied it totally. If you do not believe that we will be resurrected, then you have denied that Christ was resurrected. No doubt, those who were denying the resurrection of the dead would not have denied that Christ rose from the dead, but if you deny one you deny both.

2) Preaching is Vain

These consequences build upon each other step by step. If there is no resurrection, then Christ is not risen; if

Christ is not risen, then the preaching of the Gospel is vain or empty and useless. Without the foundation of Jesus Christ as the living Saviour and the resurrected Son of God, the Gospel will collapse and fall to the ground as untrue. How could we effectively preach salvation through Jesus if he died and did not rise?

3) Faith is Vain

What basis would there be for our faith in God's Word if it proved untrue in the matter of Jesus' resurrection from the dead? All that we have held to would be taken from our grasp and we would be left with nothing.

4) Apostles were False Teachers

The apostles preached everywhere the resurrection of Jesus. It was the backbone of their message because it proved that Jesus was who he claimed to be: the divine Son of God and Saviour of the world. If Christ did not rise, the apostles were guilty of perpetrating a terrible fraud on those who heard and believed.

5) All People are Lost

If Christ did not rise, then he was not the Son of God and could not pay the price for sin to be forgiven. All those who claimed him as Saviour would still be lost in their sins with no hope of salvation. Even those who died trusting in Jesus would be lost if he never rose from the dead. Think of the horror you would feel if you passed into eternity trusting in Jesus as Saviour only to find that he had been an imposter and not God's Son at all. One of the most powerful verses in the Bible is found here: "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." We do have hope in this life but our greatest hope reaches beyond life to eternity. Our hope is anchored in Jesus as the resurrected Son of God who bore our sins on Calvary and ascended into Heaven to intercede for us.

C. Chronology of Resurrection

Paul now states positively that Christ did rise from the dead. Not only did Christ rise from the dead as proof that he was the Son of God, but he assured that we also would rise from the dead to eternal life. Christ is called the "firstfruits" of the resurrection. All resurrection did not end with that of Christ; it **began** with his. Christ was the first one ever raised from the dead to immortality. Those who were resurrected by Jesus during his ministry were raised back to physical life and at a later date they died and were buried. Jesus was the first resurrected but he was not to be the last. Paul states that those who are saved will be raised at the coming of Jesus which we call the Rapture. All of those who died in the faith of Jesus Christ will be resurrected bodily from the grave to live with the Lord forever.

II. Nature of Resurrection

Paul anticipates questions concerning the nature of the resurrection: How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? He then gives instruction and illustrates what the nature of the resurrected body will be like.

A. Grain that is sown

He first mentions the principle of life found in the sowing of seed into the ground. When we sow the grain we do not sow the finished product, just a token of it. The seed has life in it but it is not evident until the seed is buried and rots under the earth. When the seed dies, it sprouts forth the new life of the plant which grows to maturity and produces fruit. As the final plant is the product of the seed yet differs from it, so our resurrected body is the product of our natural body yet is different in nature.

B. Earthly and Spiritual bodies

Paul reminds us that not all flesh is

exactly the same. There are differences even in earthly flesh and life. Men have one kind of flesh, animals another kind, fish another type, and birds yet another. There are not only differences between earthly creatures, there is a difference between earthly bodies and heavenly bodies also. Angels have bodies but they differ from our earthly bodies.

C. Sun, moon, and stars

Among the planets and heavenly bodies there is a difference of glory. The moon has glory but not exactly like the sun. The stars have glory but not all are exactly alike. This is to illustrate that our resurrected body will be different from our present body.

D. Resurrected Body Described

Paul leaves the illustrating and gives some definite qualities that will characterize the resurrected body.

1) Incorruptible- It will not be subject to death and corruption. The resurrected body will never suffer from sickness or pain but will live vigorously forever.

2) Glorious- Our present body is the source of much trouble and discouragement. It is often a hindrance to our spiritual desires as the "spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." Our new body will be glorious; never a hindrance or weakness. It will perfectly complement our immortal soul and spirit.

3) Spiritual- It will not be subject to the laws of physical life but will be in accordance with God's spiritual laws.

4) Like Christ's body- Paul states that we have borne the image of the earthly man, Adam, and we will bear the image of the spiritual man, Christ Jesus. Probably the best illustration of the resurrected body is that of Jesus after he had risen. He himself said that

he had a body of flesh and bone. He did not say it was flesh and blood but flesh and bone. The blood is a corrupting agent in the natural body after death. The resurrected body evidently has no blood. Jesus was able to eat and did so in the sight of his disciples. Jesus also was able to pass through closed doors, appear and disappear. How the body can pass through solid matter is somewhat of a mystery, but Jesus was able to do so. (see Lk 24:36-43; John 20:19,20,24-29)

III. Triumph of Resurrection

In verses 51-57 Paul discusses the triumph of the resurrection over physical nature, death, and the grave. Those who are alive when Jesus returns for his saints, will be instantly changed from mortal to immortal. They will experience instantaneous death and resurrection at the sound of the trump of God. Those faithful Christians who are in the grave will be raised up and changed from corruptible to incorruptible. Death is swallowed up in victory; its sting is removed and its power is vanquished.

IV. Implications of Resurrection

While this is a wonderful doctrine to study about, there are some practical implications to be seen. Verse 58 starts with "therefore"; since all of the above is true, then these things should follow. Since there will be a resurrection of the dead, we should be "steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord." We should not be wavering in our faith and commitment, but our heart should be fixed and our mind made up to serve the Lord. There is an eternity to plan for and now is the time to plan.

Daily Bible Reading for this Week:

Sun ☐ . Josh. 19-21 ☐ . . Lk. 2:25-52
 Mon ☐ . Josh. 22-24 ☐ Lk. 3
 Tues ☐ . . . Judg. 1-3 ☐ . . . Lk. 4:1-30

Wed ☐ . . . Judg. 4-6 ☐ . . Lk. 4:31-44
 Thur ☐ . . . Judg. 7-8 ☐ . . . Lk. 5:1-16
 Fri ☐ . . . Judg. 9-10 ☐ . . Lk. 5:17-39
 Sat ☐ . . . Judg. 11-12 ☐ . . . Lk. 6:1-26

April 7, 2024



True Christian Liberty

Theme: When a person comes to Christ for salvation he experiences marvelous liberty. In the Christian life there are biblical guidelines for this liberty.

Golden Text: *"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage."* (Gal. 5:1)

Scripture Reading for the Lesson - 1 Corinthians 8:4-13

4 As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one.

5 For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,)

6 But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.

7 Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled.

8 But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the

better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse.

9 But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak.

10 For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols;

11 And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?

12 But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ.

13 Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.

Introduction

Today's lesson will cover chapters 8 and 9 and part of chapter 10. We will be dealing with the issue of Christian liberty. We know that when a sinner comes to Jesus, repents of his sin, and believes on the Lord as Saviour, he is set free from the power of Satan and sin. This new believer now embarks upon a life of liberty in Christ. But, what is the nature of this liberty? Is it the liberty to do anything he pleases? Certainly not.

He is now to live in liberty as he lives in obedience to God's Word. Disobedience of God's clear commands is not liberty but rebellion. While living in Christian liberty we understand that we are expected to obey the Scripture's as God's final authority in all matters of life and conduct.

Exposition of Today's Lesson

I. The Problem that Existed

The city of Corinth was a stronghold of idolatry and immorality. The people who lived there had known nothing but idol worship all of their lives. Their religion of idolatry touched almost every area of life. In this case it was involved even in what they would eat for their meals. It was common practice for the meat which had been offered to idols in sacrifice to then be put in the marketplace for sale. This market was near the idolatrous temple and the towns people would come there to buy the meat for their meals. Evidently, there were also some restaurants near the temple which served prepared meals using the meat which had previously been offered to idols.

The problem that arose was this: should a believer who had rejected idolatry and turned to Christ eat this meat which had been offered to idols? This question, along with others, had been sent to Paul so that he could address the issue and give his counsel and instructions to the church.

Paul makes three points in his discussion of this matter:

1) Idols are nothing

The fact is that these statues that are worshiped and sacrificed to are absolutely nothing but pieces of stone. They do not really exist in the sphere of life. They are created from the imagination of man and therefore have no power or authority whatsoever. Those who were believers knew this to be true, so they were not bothered one way or the other about the meat that had been offered to an idol. It might as well have been offered to a tree in the woods or a boulder on the hillside. The ceremony meant absolutely nothing as far as they were concerned; it had no

spiritual value. The believer of that day could go to the market and buy whatever meat he desired without really worrying about whether or not it had been offered to some idol.

Paul mentioned the fact that though these things be called gods, they are not really gods at all. There is only one God, the Father, and one Lord Jesus Christ; these idols count for nothing. Therefore, he makes the point that to eat meat which had been offered to an idol was not in itself an act of sin.

2) Some have not this knowledge

There were some people, and they were probably many since idolatry was so widespread in Corinth, that did not understand this about idols. To them, idols were something. They had been trained from their childhood to reverence, worship, and sacrifice to these idols. Even when they became Christians, they had these past teachings remaining in their mind. When one becomes a Christian, he does not suddenly forget everything he ever knew before. If that were the case, a man would not even know who his wife and family were or what his job was. There was going to be a learning process for this new believer, and he would eventually understand that the idol was nothing but lifeless stone. As for now, however, he is still very conscious of his former life in idolatry and is struggling with his feelings concerning idols and their temple.

For this one to go to the idol's temple to eat, or to purchase meat which had been offered to an idol, would be a great wrong. He would feel that he was reverting to his old idolatrous religion or at least compromising in his stand for Christ as the one and only saviour of the world. No doubt he would feel very strongly about the matter; if it was

wrong for him, it surely must be wrong for everyone else also.

3) In some cases, we should adapt our behavior out of consideration for our brother.

Later, we will discuss some principles relevant to us. Here we simply state that Paul instructed those who felt they had the liberty to eat this meat, not to eat it if it would cause one of these new believers to backslide from the Lord.

II. Principles to Examine

A. What is safe for one may not be safe for another. It is important to preface our discussion with this point: In dealing with the matter of Christian liberty, we are not speaking of issues which are clearly spelled out in the Scriptures as right or wrong. We are dealing with things that are not specifically addressed in the Bible. What the Bible condemns is condemned for everyone regardless of race, environment, opinion etc. Here, we realize that the eating of meat which had been offered to idols was not directly forbidden or classified as sin. While for some it would have been permissible, for others it would have caused offence. While we are living for the Lord, there are some things that we must deal with and make decisions about that have no direct reference made to them in the Bible. They are what we sometimes call "gray areas." They are not labeled "black" in Scripture; but neither are they labeled "white." They are not commanded; neither are they expressly forbidden. In these matters the principles discussed here should help us decide what our proper attitude and action should be.

What may be safe for you, may not be safe for another. While you may not be hindered spiritually at all by that thing, someone else might fall into temptation and sin by doing it. In some

cases, what makes it unsafe for someone is that it is something that connects them to the life they lived before salvation. It was the case here in Corinth. The reason it bothered some to eat this meat was that they had been so involved in idolatry before that this action was a reminder of and a connection with their past.

We must also remember that we are dealing with a **weak conscience** in these verses. This was not a silly or petty matter that was thought up by someone who wanted to be "holier than thou." It was a matter of genuine conviction. Some would use these verses to force their every opinion about living the holiness life on everyone else whether there is Bible for their belief or not. This is far from the principle found here. It was not that the feelings of the new convert would be hurt by seeing someone eating that meat. The problem was that if they did it just because others did it, they would stumble spiritually because their conscience was still weak. They had not been saved long enough to learn all that they needed to learn. They needed time for their conscience to be instructed in the truths of God's Word. If you constantly claim you are "offended" by the actions of others, either you are a know-it-all who thinks you are always right, or you have a weak conscience that needs instruction. It seems that there are two extremes in this matter that should be avoided:

1) Some claim to be "offended" by anything that does not agree with their own opinion. They want everyone else to limit their liberty for them. "Well, if they don't conform to my opinion about this, I just won't have anything to do with them."

2) Some, on the other hand, refuse to limit their liberty for the sake of anyone else. "I don't care what anybody thinks, I'll do it if I want to."

B. We must judge not only with our knowledge, but with love. While we may have the knowledge of the rightness or wrongness of an action, we must be careful not to judge without love. Paul says in verse one that "knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth." If we despise someone just because their knowledge has not reached the level that we feel ours has, we have done wrong ourselves. Remember, we are not in the body of Christ to "bite and devour" one another, but to assist each other and bear one another's burdens. We should do whatever we can to build someone up spiritually and not do anything that would cause them to lose out with God.

C. No one should claim a liberty which would cause another to stumble. We are warned by Paul to "take heed," which means "beware, be careful, be cautious," that we do not insist on any liberty that would cause a brother to fall. In this matter, Paul went so far as to say that he would not eat meat in his entire life, if by doing so he would cause a brother to be lost.

In chapter 10:23-33 Paul gives some further instructions:

1) When you go to buy the meat, do not ask questions about where it came from.

2) When meat is set before you, eat it without asking if it had been offered to idols.

3) If you are informed that it has been offered to idols, then refuse to eat it.

Paul emphasizes the matter of conscience. If you know something will cause someone else to stumble, avoid it. But you need not ask everyone around, "would this be a problem to

you." The reigning principle he gives is this: "whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." (10:31)

III. Paul's Example

We can but briefly deal with the contents of chapter 9, but Paul shows the Corinthians what he is talking about by using his own life as an example.

A. He states his rights as an Apostle. (9:1-14) He tells them that he has the right to be married and the right to receive material support.

B. He has surrendered these rights. (9:15-23) He has voluntarily given up these rights for two main reasons:

1) He does not use the gospel as reason to glory in or promote "self."

2) He is doing everything in his power to win souls.

If the motive of our life is to see that "self" is pleased and cared for, this issue of Christian liberty will cause us no end of trouble. If, on the other hand, the motive of our life is to please God, we will have less difficulty in dealing with matters of Christian liberty.



Our family was acquainted with a minister who refused to drink pop from a bottle. He didn't forbid it for everyone else, but he wouldn't do it. Obviously, it would not be sin to drink a soft drink just because it was in a bottle, but this man had been an alcoholic before his salvation and drinking from any kind of bottle was a reminder of and a connection to that former life. For him it was better not to drink anything from a bottle.

Daily Bible Reading for this Week:

Sun ☐ . Judg. 13-15 ☐ . . Lk. 6:27-49
Mon ☐ . Judg. 16-18 ☐ . . Lk. 7:1-30
Tues ☐ . Judg. 19-21 ☐ . . Lk. 7:31-50

Wed ☐ . . . Ruth 1-4 ☐ . . Lk. 8:1-25
Thur ☐ . . 1 Sam. 1-3 ☐ . . Lk. 8:26-56
Fri ☐ . . 1 Sam. 4-6 ☐ . . Lk. 9:1-17
Sat ☐ . . 1 Sam. 7-9 ☐ . . Lk. 9:18-36

April 14, 2024



Hair: the Long and Short of It

Theme: Holiness standards are not inventions of man. They are based on the principles and precepts in Scripture. This includes our beliefs about hair.

Golden Text: *"But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God."*
(1 Cor. 11:3)

Scripture Reading for the Lesson - 1 Corinthians 11:3-16

3 But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.

4 Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head.

5 But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven.

6 For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered.

7 For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man.

8 For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man.

9 Neither was the man created for the

woman; but the woman for the man.

10 For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels.

11 Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord.

12 For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman; but all things of God.

13 Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered?

14 Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?

15 But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering.

16 But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God.

Introduction

In our lesson today we will deal with a subject that has stirred much debate in the church world. In days gone by, men having short hair and women having long hair was common custom and practice. It was the belief and practice of people of all denominations. But in the last 75 years, things have changed drastically. We that are Holiness, Pentecostal believers who hold firmly to the God-given principles concerning our hair are considered odd and out of touch with the world. As a matter of fact, many people who once believed and lived these principles now have decided that they are not necessary. All of this does not change the truths of God's Word.

Exposition of Today's Lesson

I. The Matter of Distinction

A. God created male and female and never intended for them to attempt to merge or blend as one sex. (Genesis 1:27) This was the express purpose and will of God for the human race. God gave the man and the woman special roles to fulfill in life. One is not complete without the other; they were never to try to be the other.

B. God even instructed that men and women are not to wear each other's apparel. According to Deut.22:5, it is an abomination for the man to dress like the woman, or for the woman to dress like the man. For those who say that all the Israelites wore robes so there could have been no difference, let me say: Is God so ignorant as to command them not to wear the other's clothes if there was no distinction between them? Also, as we will see with our next point, this principle of distinction is not just "an Old Testament law" that has been "done away with."

C. God classifies the merging of the sexes as "unrighteous" and declares that those who do this will not inherit the kingdom of God. 1 Cor. 6:9 catalogues the "effeminate" with fornicators, homosexuals, thieves, and others. The effeminate is the man who is "womanish in his dress, appearance, or actions." God has not changed his mind about this matter of distinction.

II. The Matter of Authority

A. The Chain of Command

This matter of authority is often overlooked in dealing with the subject of hair; but it is intertwined throughout the passage and is essential for our understanding this issue.

1. Christ is the head of man. The

Bible leaves no doubt that all mankind is under the authority of Christ. He is our head in the sense that he is our authority; we are under Him in authority and power. We are responsible to reverence and obey Him.

2 Man is the head of the woman. Man is the head of the woman by:

Creation - (Verses 8 and 9) Man was created by the direct act of God from the dust of the earth. Then God took a rib from man and created woman. Woman was created from man and for man; she was created to be his helpmeet or companion (not his slave.)

Command - The commands in Scripture deal specifically with the wife and husband. The husband is declared to be the head of the wife; she is to be in subjection to her own husband. (Eph.5:22,23; Col.3:18) Just because I am a man, does not mean that I am the personal authority of every woman.

B. The Covering of the Head.

1. Instructions for the Man

a. Man's Head not to be covered. (4,7) Man is instructed that his head is to be uncovered because he is the image and glory of God. Does this refer to the wearing of a hat or turban or to man's hair? The word "covered" is a verb in the Greek, not a noun. Some teach that this refers to an artificial veil but this is simply not the case. There are other places in the Bible where this same word is used: Luke 23:30 - they say to the mountains, fall on us and **cover** us.

Mat.8:24 - the ship was **covered** with the waves.

Luke 8:16 - No man when he hath lighted a candle, **coverth** it...

In none of these places does the word "cover" refer to an artificial

covering as a veil. In the first case the covering was mountains; in the second, water; in the third, a vessel or bushel.

It is seen then that we cannot determine what the covering was simply by the word "covered." The context however, lets us know that the covering was referring to hair.

Since the Christian man reflects the glory of Christ, if he has long hair covering his head, he robs his own head of its chief function of this reflection of the glory of Christ.

b. For man to have long hair is a shame. Paul makes it very clear in verse 14 that a man is not to have long hair. It is to be kept short. There are two reasons:

1) Long hair on the man dishonors Christ as man's spiritual head and authority. (4,7)

2) It breaks God's rule of distinction. God clearly designed that men have short hair and women have long hair. For a man to allow his hair to grow long, causes him to look like the woman.

The Bible does not give measurements of feet or inches to determine what "long" is. But here are some things to consider:

1) We are told that "nature itself teaches" us. Nature has provided man with a hairline around the top and sides of the head. If hair is allowed to grow long beyond nature's guidelines, it is too long.

2) "Covered" in verse 4 could be defined as "hanging down from the head." If the hair is hanging down from the head; over the ears, over the eyes, over the collar, it should be cut back. In Ezekiel 44:20 the priests in particular were told that they were not to allow their "locks to grow long" They were instructed to "poll" or "cut" their hair.

3) An unusual word is used in

verses 14 and 15 for "hair." This is the only place in Scripture that the word is used and it is a verb form. In English, we cannot conceive "hair" as a verb, but rather as a noun. We must see the word used like this: if a man "hairs" it is a shame unto him. This shows a man's hair that has grown and is continuing to grow long.

2. Instructions to the Woman

a. Head is to be covered. (5) The woman is not to have her head uncovered. If she does so, she dishonours her head, her husband. We should ask ourselves what is meant by the praying and prophesying in this verse? Is this something that takes place only at church? We all know that most of our praying does not take place in church; we are only there for 6 - 10 hours in the whole week. "Prophesying" here is not just a public utterance in the church, but also refers to "teaching or declaration of truth." The sphere of a woman's teaching is her everyday life. She is the superintendent of the home and teaches her children to be pure, industrious, clean, respectful, etc. Therefore, the woman must be properly "covered" not only in the church but everywhere.

b. Hair is given for a covering. (15) We have already mentioned what is meant by the phrase "long hair" when we talked of the man. Long hair is "hair that is allowed to grow." Every Greek lexicon consulted stated this clearly. For a woman's hair to be considered long, it must be uncut; for it is impossible to cut it and "allow it to grow" at the same time. "Long" is not a matter of feet and inches; but of cutting or not cutting. It is here in verse 15 that the Greek word for "veil" is used for the only time in the entire passage. The statement is made that "her hair is

given her for a covering (veil)." The phrase says this: her hair has been given to her instead of a veil or wrap. God has designed that the woman let her hair grow long as her covering and glory.

3. For a woman to be shorn or shaven is a shame. (6) Most people evidently believe both of these words to have the exact same meaning. They are quite different however:

shaven - to shave, as with a razor

shorn - to shear, to cut with scissors (See Vincent's Word Studies and Linguistic Key to the Greek New Test.) To cut part of the hair and leave a remnant is not meeting the requirement of "long hair." Notice, that Paul did not say that a part of her hair is given for a covering. If this were the case the man would be in a dilemma. He would have some hair so he could never be considered to be uncovered. If a portion of a woman's hair is sufficient for her to be covered, then a portion of man's hair means he is also covered. The evident truth here is that the woman's hair is long when it is not cut. In contrast to the man, when the woman "hairs" or has her hair grown and continuing to grow, she then has long hair.

If we allow cutting or trimming to occur, then we as men must set an arbitrary length to constitute "long" hair. Which one of us is best able or possesses the authority to do this? We cannot! God made it possible for every woman to have long hair regardless of its measurement in inches or feet. If her hair grows 5 feet and is uncut, it is long; if it grows 5 inches and is uncut, it is long.

d. The woman's long hair shows

Daily Bible Reading for this Week:

Sun 1 Sam. 10-12 . . Lk. 9:37-62
 Mon 1 Sam. 13-14 . . Lk. 10:1-24
 Tues 1 Sam. 15-16 . Lk. 10:25-42

submission to her husband and God, and is a glory unto her. (7-13,15) The woman's long hair is her authority to pray to and worship God since it shows her in submission to her husband. The woman who does not allow her hair to grow uncut is dishonouring her husband and therefore God. If the husband gives her permission to cut her hair, it does not change God's principles. She is still dishonouring her husband and her God.

Even the angels are involved in this matter. The woman is to have "power on her head because of the angels." Angels are considered to be the guardians of the order of creation and present in the worship service. Therefore, the woman ought to have long hair out of reverence for the holy angels who are invisibly present in the assembly. Also, as the angels are related to God, so the woman is to the man. God's face is uncovered; angels in his presence are covered. Man's head is uncovered; the woman's is to be covered. For her not to be covered would be seen as rebellion by the angels and therefore it would be offensive.

16. Man seem to be contentious

Many people take this verse to mean that if anyone does not agree with what has been said in the previous passage, he can disregard it and do whatever he pleases. Talk about strained interpretation! Paul concludes his discussion of this subject by saying, If any man does not agree with what I have said, I remind you that we have no such custom as the woman having short hair or the man having long hair, and neither do any of the churches of God.

Wed 1 Sam. 17-18 . . Lk. 11:1-28
 Thur 1 Sam. 19-21 . Lk. 11:29-54
 Fri 1 Sam. 22-24 . . Lk. 12:1-31
 Sat 1 Sam. 25-26 . Lk. 12:32-59

April 21, 2024

Lesson



8

The Lord's Supper

Theme: The Lord's Supper or Communion is one of the Church's ordinances. It will be more meaningful to us as we understand its significance.

Golden Text: *"And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me."* (Luke 22:19)

Scripture Reading for the Lesson - 1 Corinthians 11:23-32

23 For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread:

24 And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.

25 After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.

26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come.

27 Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the

Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.

28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.

29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.

30 For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.

31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.

32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

Introduction

The Last Supper of our Lord Jesus was a somber and moving occasion. He had gathered with his disciples for this last time of fellowship and friendship. He was soon to die for the sins of the world and knew what lay ahead for these disciples. They were going to experience great confusion and turmoil in the days to come and would be tried severely with discouragement. It was in this setting that Jesus instituted the ordinance of the Lord's Supper or Communion, as it is more commonly known. Clearly, it was designed to become a regular practice of the Church, his body of believers. It is a simple yet profound ceremony that is filled with spiritual meaning.

Evidently, the believers in Corinth had changed the emphasis of this service and made it a time of feasting and fellowship with one another instead of a service in remembrance of Christ. We will study Paul's instructions and trust that the Communion will be more meaningful to us in the future.

Exposition of Today's Lesson

I. Commemoration

The account of the Last Supper is found in Matthew 26:17-29, Mark 14:12-25 and Luke 22:7-23 as well as in our study passage in 1 Corinthians 11. Jesus knew that his suffering and crucifixion were near. He desired to keep the Passover with his disciples for one last time before he left them. Jesus knew all that was ahead for himself and for his disciples. He knew that they were facing difficult times of confusion and discouragement. They were going to feel deserted and forsaken by the One they had trusted and loved. They were going to face opposition and persecution in a hostile world. Jesus wanted to share this last supper with them not only for the fellowship, but also for the purpose of preparing them somewhat for what lay just ahead.

24. Take, eat; this is my body

When they had finished eating the Passover meal, Jesus took a loaf of bread, prayed his blessing over it and began to break it apart. He gave pieces of the bread to each of the disciples and instructed them to eat it. He told them that this was his body that was broken and given to them. While there are some religious groups and denominations that believe and teach that the bread and juice are literally the body and blood of Jesus, it is obvious from the institution of the Communion that it certainly **was not** his actual body. Jesus was standing there alive and whole before them. They ate a piece of bread, nothing more. Jesus was using the bread as a **symbol** of his body. His body was going to be broken by fists, thorns, scourge, nails and a spear. He was giving his life as a ransom for us.

25. This cup . . . in my blood

After they had eaten the broken bread, Jesus took the cup, blessed it and instructed the disciples to drink it. He told them that it was the "new testament in my blood." This was not alcoholic wine; it is described by Jesus himself in Matthew's account, as "this fruit of the vine." We need not spend much time arguing this point. Those who have studied the Bible in its entirety know that the drinking of "strong drink" is expressly forbidden throughout the Scriptures. Jesus certainly was not drinking fermented wine, but fresh grape juice. He used the juice as a symbol of his blood that was to be shed for mankind's sins.

Jesus was instituting the Lord's Supper as a ceremony of commemoration. It was to remind us of: 1) The breaking of his body and 2) the shedding of his blood.

Each time we observe Communion we are to remember that he was "*wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed.*" (Is.53:5) God made it clear that "*without shedding of blood there is no remission of sin.*" "*Ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.*" (1 Peter 1:18,19)

Paul makes it evident in his instructions to the Corinthian church that Jesus wanted this ceremony to be observed "in remembrance of me." Paul used that phrase twice and Luke used it also in his account.

If we take Communion without re-

remembering what Jesus did for us, we have taken it in vain. Oh, that we might be mindful of the terrible price that was paid for our salvation and eternal life!

II. Communion

The observance of the Lord's Supper is commonly called the Communion. Often, however, it is not real communion at all. We may partake of the bread and juice and yet not truly commune with our Lord.

Jesus knew when he did this the first time that he was soon to die, resurrect and ascend into Heaven. It was clear that he instituted this ritual not just for ceremony's sake, but that the disciples might set the time aside as a time of communion with Him through the Holy Ghost, the Comforter he had promised to send to them. They were going to need spiritual strength to endure the hardships they would face. Taking the Communion would first of all remind them of Jesus and what he had done for them. Then, secondly, it would cause them to **worship** him for who he was and what he had done. It is one thing for our Communion service to be a time of commemoration; it is quite another for it to be a time of spiritual communion. This ceremony should never be done lightly and carelessly.

Remembering what Jesus did so that we might have eternal life is necessary, but that alone is not enough. Our remembering should result in worship. We should cry out to God in thankfulness and gratefulness, praising him for what he has done. Paul stated that "*as often as ye eat this bread and drink cup, ye do shew the Lord's death...*" We are reminding ourselves of his death and praising him for suffering so on our behalf. We enter in spiritual communion with him, and in the words of Jesus in Revelation 3:20, "*I . . . will*

sup with him and he with me."

If you dread Communion and miss church when it is scheduled, something is wrong with your experience. Some people feel as though they deserved what Jesus did on Calvary. If you sit dead on your pew and refuse to receive the Communion, or doze through the whole ceremony, you are showing a pathetic lack of love for our Lord and Savior. It is designed to be a wonderful time of **fellowship** between the Savior and the Saint.

III. Commitment

Matthew, Mark and Luke all record Jesus words that he would not drink of the fruit of the vine until he drank it anew in the kingdom of God. Paul now tells us that each time we take the Communion, we are showing the Lord's death, **till he come**. Did you realize that every time we observe the Communion, we are committing ourselves to be faithful until he comes for the church? We are making a vow to live, fight, and die, if necessary, for our Lord, the King of Kings. A true observance of Communion brings about a new dedication of our life to the Lord. Maybe the reason that some do not enjoy the Communion is that they are not dedicated to serving the Lord like they should be. It is difficult to remember what Jesus did for us and truly worship and praise him for it, without a natural response of dedication and devotion to Him.

Communion highlights these points:

1) Jesus is coming again. He said so; angels said so; Paul, Peter, John, Jude, and James said so. He is coming for those who have been washed in his blood.

2) We must be faithfully serving him when he comes if we want to enter the joys of Heaven. (Matt.24:44-51)

3) In the midst of our toil here on earth, we are letting him know that we

are **still on the way**. We have not turned back.

IV. Caution

The Corinthian church did not realize the importance of this observance. They had changed it from a spiritual ceremony into a self-indulgent feast. They were not gathering to Commemorate the Lord's suffering and death. Rather than gathering to Commune with the Lord or Commit their lives anew to him, they were using it as an occasion to fellowship with each other and have a good time. (See 1Cor. 11:20-22) Therefore, Paul gives them a Caution and warning about the Communion.

1) Anyone who partakes "unworthily" is guilty of the body and blood of Jesus. (vs.27)

2) Anyone who partakes "unworthily" brings "damnation" to himself. (vs.29)

3) Some are sick and some have died because they partook unworthily. (vs.30)

4) We should "examine" ourselves before we partake of Communion. (vs.28)

5) We should "judge" ourselves so we will not be judged by God and chastened by him. (vs.31,32)

We must discuss what is meant by the word "unworthily." It seems to refer to the individual himself who is partaking of the Communion, since we are instructed to examine and judge ourselves before partaking. What makes a person unworthy?

1) To be an **Unbeliever**. Any person who is not saved through faith in Jesus blood profanes and desecrates the Communion. He has rejected the atonement and therefore profanes the event because he has not been

cleansed by the blood of Christ.

2) To be an **Unforgiving believer**. Jesus made it clear in Matthew 5:23, 24 that the believer who has ought against a brother, or knows a brother has ought against him, is **not to pray to God until the offense is forgiven**. He said to leave the gift at the altar and be reconciled to the brother; then come back and offer the gift to God. For anyone to take the Communion when they are harboring unforgiveness in their heart makes them guilty of Jesus blood, because he shed it to reconcile us to God and make us brothers and sisters together in his family.

When we approach the Table of the Lord, we should sincerely examine ourselves and judge ourselves. The Psalmist cried out, "*search me O God, and know my heart: try me and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*" (Ps.139:23,24)

If we refuse to make an honest examination, God will then judge us. When he finds iniquity in us, he will chasten us in an attempt to cause us to repent. If we refuse to repent, we will then be condemned with the world. Let us not avoid Communion out of fear that we are "unworthy." Let us examine ourselves and do what is necessary to make ourselves "worthy."



Illustrations



Bedouin tribesmen hold a ceremonial feast called a sulha to mark the end of a blood feud. We take communion to mark the end of our struggle against God and to celebrate his victory and our surrender.

Daily Bible Reading for this Week:			
Sun	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 Sam. 27-29	<input type="checkbox"/> . . Lk. 13:1-22	Wed <input type="checkbox"/> . . 2 Sam. 3-5 <input type="checkbox"/> . Lk. 14:25-35
Mon	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 Sam. 30-31	<input type="checkbox"/> . Lk. 13:23-35	Thur <input type="checkbox"/> . . 2 Sam. 6-8 <input type="checkbox"/> . . Lk. 15:1-10
Tues	<input type="checkbox"/> . . 2 Sam. 1-2	<input type="checkbox"/> . . Lk. 14:1-24	Fri <input type="checkbox"/> . 2 Sam. 9-11 <input type="checkbox"/> . Lk. 15:11-32
			Sat <input type="checkbox"/> 2 Sam. 12-13 <input type="checkbox"/> Lk. 16

April 28, 2024

Lesson
9

The Spiritual Gifts

Theme: God has provided the Gifts of the Spirit for the edification and exhortation of the Church. We should seek to be used in these gifts.

Golden Text: "Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church." (1 Cor 14:12)

Scripture Reading for the Lesson - 1 Corinthians 12:1, 4-11; 14:1-4

12:1 Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant.

4 Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.

5 And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord.

6 And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.

7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

8 For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;

9 To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;

10 To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to an-

other discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:

11 But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

14:1 Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy.

2 For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries.

3 But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort.

4 He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church.

Introduction

In this lesson we will discuss the subject of Spiritual Gifts. There has been much emphasis placed upon these gifts in some circles, yet in other circles they are largely ignored or even rejected. In our Holiness, Pentecostal movement, the gifts have too often been relegated to the "good old days" of the past. In many of our churches the gifts of the Spirit are rarely manifested, though we would fervently insist that we believe in the power of the Holy Ghost and would be upset if someone suggested that they were not for today.

Just the belief that spiritual gifts are of God and are for the church today is simply not enough. We must sincerely seek to be used individually in the gifts of the Spirit and be grieved when they are not in evidence in our assemblies. God gave them to the church to uplift and edify the believers of the body of Christ.

Exposition of Today's Lesson

I. The Gifts Given

A. Imparted by the Spirit.

These spiritual gifts are truly the gifts **of the Spirit**. They are imparted or given by the Holy Ghost himself. They are not given by men, whether they be preachers, pastors, prophets, evangelists, etc. No man, regardless of his calling or position, has the ability or the authority to "give" someone a spiritual gift. Many of us have heard of those who claim to impart gifts of the Spirit and publicize that fact in order to build their crowds and impress their peers. I Timothy 4:14 speaks of a gift that was **in** Timothy that was given him by prophecy and the laying on of hands of the elders. This clearly is the giving of a position, probably the position of pastor, not the imparting of one of the gifts of the Spirit. Beware of any man who claims to give out spiritual gifts. They are only given by the Spirit of God. In verse 7 we read of the manifestation of the Spirit. In verses 8-10 we are told four times that the gifts are given by the Spirit. Verse 11 states that these gifts are divided to every man as He (the Spirit) wills.

We are told in verses 4-6 that there are different gifts, ministries and operations, but they are all operated by the One God in three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. We are not in charge of giving these gifts nor may we manifest them in our own power and at our own choosing.

B. Imparted to Believers.

It is evident from this passage that these gifts are given to ordinary men and women just like you and me. There are some qualifications for those who will be used in these gifts:

1) You must be saved and baptized with the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost

baptism is a baptism of power that enables the Spirit of God to work in and through you. The Holy Ghost gives His gifts to those whom He has filled.

2) You must have a earnest desire to be used in spiritual gifts. The unconcerned and indifferent believer will not be used by the Holy Ghost. So we are encouraged in 1 Cor. 12:31- "covet earnestly the best gifts." 1 Cor. 14:1 instructs us to "desire spiritual gifts." This desire to be used is more than saying it with the lips; it is a desire that causes us to seek the Lord and the fulness of His power.

3) You must be obedient when the Spirit moves upon you. If you resist the working of the Holy Ghost when he tries to speak or work through you, you will not be an effective channel. We all realize the frailty of our humanity, and know that we have sometimes missed our opportunity to be used by the Spirit because of self-consciousness, shyness, or pride. God is merciful and makes allowance for our weakness, but He will not persist in trying to use the person who continues to hold back and refuses to obey the prompting of the Spirit.

II. The Spiritual Gifts

The apostle Paul lists nine specific gifts that are given by the Holy Ghost. They may be divided into three groups:

1) Gifts of revelation. These provide the power to know: word of wisdom, word of knowledge, discerning of spirits.

2) Gifts of power. These provide the power to act: The gifts of faith, miracles, and healings.

3) Gifts of utterance. These provide power to speak: prophecy, tongues, and interpretation.

A. The Word of Wisdom

This gift is the Holy Ghost making one supernaturally wise at a given time for a specific purpose. It is the ability to speak the right words at the right time, by the Spirit's anointing, to bring about the proper result. Wisdom, in contrast to knowledge, is an insight concerning practical conduct or action and is the correct use of knowledge or facts. The significance of it being a **word** of wisdom is that no one is given all of God's wisdom, all of the time. This is God imparting a piece or fragment of His wisdom for the specific need. In the Bible we find many examples of the word of wisdom:

1) Ability to accomplish God's will. (Ex. 31:3) Bezaleel

2) Leadership. Joshua ,Deut.34:9

3) Counseling; dealing with the personal problems of others. The classic example is Solomon resolving the conflict of the two women with one living child.

4) Anointed preaching.(Acts 6:10) Stephen. Often the Spirit will use the minister to give a word of wisdom to someone in the congregation in the midst of his message. It is exactly what the person needs to know and do for their specific situation.

5) Everyday demands of life. (Pro.3:5-7) The word of wisdom may not be a public proclamation. It may be a private revelation just for you and your need.

6) Resolving conflict.(Acts 15) When a church is torn apart and good people are wounded, the word of wisdom from the Holy Ghost is not present.

7) Witnessing and defense of the Gospel. Jesus told the disciples they would be brought into court and put on trial. He told them that the Holy Ghost would teach them what to say in that same hour.

B. The Word of Knowledge.

This may be defined as being given

knowledge supernaturally by the Spirit of God.

1) Knowledge of God. This is not what most people think of when considering this gift, but it is probably the most common manifestation of it. How can we really know God? We have His Word but it is of little value without the illumination of the Spirit. Often the Spirit gives us knowledge about God in our personal devotions. Again, this gift does not always involve a public demonstration.

2) Knowledge of man's secrets or human happenings. God will sometimes tell a Holy Ghost filled believer what someone else is in need of, what they are doing, or what is about to happen. Some examples in Scripture include Elisha being informed about the movements of the Syrian army; Jesus knowing that Nathaniel had been sitting under the fig tree; Peter knowing that three men were coming to find him. Sometimes God will give parents a word of knowledge about the whereabouts or actions of their children.

C. Discerning of spirits.

This is not what is commonly called "discernment" where someone claims the ability to diagnose sickness or disease, or tell someone the details of their personal life. This is the supernatural ability to know what spirit is being manifested in a given situation. Not every spirit is of God and we are instructed in 1 John 4 to "try the spirits, whether they be of God." There are:

1) man's spirit - The spirit of man which we may refer to as someone being "in the flesh." Some manifestations are not demons but a person acting in the flesh.

2) evil spirits - There are demon spirits that manifest themselves. We need to know what spirit is being manifested so we will know what needs to be done to handle the situation.

3) Spirit of God - The Holy Ghost also manifests himself through man. We must be able to discern when the Holy Ghost is moving someone in our service, and give heed to what the Spirit says to the church.

Paul discerned that the young woman in Philippi was demon possessed even though she was speaking true words concerning him. (Acts 16)

D. The Gift of Faith.

This is a supernatural faith given at a specific time for a specific situation. This is not saving faith or working faith, but divine faith to believe God for a specific purpose. It is the situation where faith seems impossible; yet suddenly, faith in God wells up within and though the circumstance seems hopeless, you feel victory instead of despair.

E. The Gift of Miracles.

This is the supernatural ability to work signs and wonders by the Spirit. It differs from the gifts of healing in that it may include wonders that have nothing to do with sickness or disease. Jesus turned water into wine; Paul smote Elymas with blindness, etc.

F. The Gifts of Healings.

These gifts deal specifically with the healing of the sick and diseased. Healing was purchased by Jesus in the Atonement and is available to us today.

G. The Gift of Prophecy.

Prophecy is the giving of a message by the Spirit of God in one's own language. Some have the misconception that prophecy is only the foretelling of future events. While this is an aspect of prophecy, most of the time, it is simply the proclaiming of a message from God concerning our present spiritual needs and condition.

H. The Gift of Tongues.

This is the giving of a message by the Spirit of God in a language that is unknown to the speaker. This message must be followed by an interpretation for it to be of benefit to the people assembled. This is not to be confused with the initial sign of the baptism of the Holy Ghost. All who receive the Holy Ghost will speak in tongues. The gift of tongues is the giving of a message to the church.

I. The Gift of Interpretation.

It is the supernatural ability to give the meaning of a message in tongues without prior knowledge of the language used. Tongues, followed by interpretation, provide the same work as the gift of prophecy alone.

III. The Gifts Governed

There are guidelines given by Paul in 1 Cor. 14 for the operation of spiritual gifts.

A. Comparison of Tongues and Prophecy.

Tongues - 1) Speaketh unto God, mysteries in the Spirit. (vs.2)

2) Edifieth himself. (vs.4)

3) Need interpretation to profit the church. (vs.5)

4) Pray that you may interpret.

Prophecy- 1) Speaketh unto men to edification, exhortation, and comfort (vs.3)

2) Edifieth the church (vs.4)

3) Causes unbelievers to be convicted, judged of sin and converted (vs.24,25)

B. Confusion to be Avoided. 1) The messages in tongues should be few in number (vs.27)

2) They need interpretation (vs.28)

3) All to be decent and in order (vs. 40)

Daily Bible Reading for this Week:

Sun ☐ 2 Sam. 14-15 ☐ . . Lk. 17:1-19

Mon ☐ 2 Sam. 16-18 ☐ . Lk. 17:20-37

Tues ☐ 2 Sam. 19-20 ☐ . . Lk. 18:1-23

Wed ☐ 2 Sam. 21-22 ☐ . Lk. 18:24-43

Thur ☐ 2 Sam. 23-24 ☐ . . Lk. 19:1-27

Fri ☐ . . . 1 Kg. 1-2 ☐ . Lk. 19:28-48

Sat ☐ . . . 1 Kg. 3-5 ☐ . . Lk. 20:1-26

May 5, 2024



Christian Unity and Love

Theme: God has given us clear instructions concerning the unity of the body of Christ, and the need for believers to love one another.

Golden Text: *"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." (John 13:34)*

Scripture Reading for the Lesson - 1 Corinthians 12:12-14; 13:1-8

12:12 For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.

13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

14 For the body is not one member, but many.

13:1 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.

3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

4 Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,

5 Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;

6 Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;

7 Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

8 Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.

Introduction

We have discussed Paul's writings concerning spiritual gifts. The spiritual gifts are very important to the body of Christ. We must be careful, however, that the operation of the gifts of the Spirit does not breed envy, jealousy, or pride in our hearts and minds. When pride and jealousy find place in our hearts and churches, division is not far behind. The spiritual gifts are for the benefit of the whole body of Christ and the entire local body as well. They are to be desired because of their spiritual benefit, not for personal pride or prominence. Sometimes we fall short in the manifestation of Holy Ghost power, while at other times, we are rejoicing in the fulness of His presence but not able to get along one with another. Without unity and love, spiritual gifts are of no value.

Exposition of Today's Lesson

I. Christian Unity

A. There is One Body.

The scriptures make it clear that there is only one body of Christ. Just as there is only one head, Jesus Christ, He only has one body. There are not 5, 10, or 100 different bodies, only one. There is much confusion wrought in our world by the myriad religious groups and denominations. They are almost innumerable and no two are exactly alike. The body of Christ is not confined to any one denomination, organization, or movement. There are two extremes to avoid in this matter:

1) The belief that if someone is not in total agreement with me, my doctrine, my beliefs, and my personal convictions, they cannot be saved and in the Church.

2) The feeling that a person can believe anything at all and they will go to heaven just as long as they are sincere.

Both of these extremes miss the fundamental truth. When a person is genuinely born again, washed in the blood of Jesus, forgiven of sin and changed by God's power, he is part of the body of Christ. At first he probably does not have much knowledge of doctrine or spiritual truths, but if he loves the Lord and continues in the truth, he is a child of God. God will have the final say as to who was in the body of Christ and who was not and there will be no room for argument or debate.

B. There are Many Members.

There is no way for us to accurately count the members of the body of Christ around the world. According to the vision that John saw, they come from every kindred, and tongue and

people and nation. God's redeemed people are from every nationality.

13. By one Spirit . . . into one body

Anyone who is truly a part of Christ's body has been placed in it by the Holy Ghost. It is the work of the Spirit to regenerate the sinner and make him a child of God. It is the work of the Spirit to manifest Christ in the hearts of all who believe and are born again. So we are baptized by the Spirit of God into the body of Christ.

C. All Members are Important.

God has not designated some members as important and essential and others as insignificant and unnecessary. Every one who has been saved is important in the body of Christ. Just as this is true concerning the universal body of Christ, so it is true concerning each local body of Christ. Obviously, all members of the body of Christ could not live in the same place and attend the same church building. So, God designed that we should be members of a local body; a local church. Paul spent his life carrying out the commission of evangelizing the lost and organizing local churches for them to attend. Each and every member is important to the body.

D. Duties and Gifts Vary.

We each have been given an ability and a responsibility. Paul likens the local body or church to the physical body so we can better understand how it is to work. The foot is just as much a part of the body as the hand, and the ear is just as much a part of the body as the eye; they each serve a different function. If the whole body were an eye, how would we hear? If we were one big ear, how would we smell? It sounds humorous to hear it put that way, but the truth remains that "God

hath set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him." (vs.18) God has not placed all members to be the pastor; he has chosen one for that responsibility. Not every member can be a deacon, a teacher, the Sunday School Superintendent and so on. There are different tasks for each of us to do. **Remember, the church belongs to God, it is not your church.** You may have purchased the land, built the building, or started that specific local church from scratch. It still is not **your** church. If you feel you own it and you can set the members as it pleases you, you are sadly mistaken. God has given positions and callings of leadership and authority and these are to be respected as such, but the church is not even the pastor's church. He is the shepherd of that flock and is responsible to God to care for them and feed them. He is to preach the Word of God without fear or favor and is the God-placed authority along with the elders or deacons.

We must not be childish when it comes to our place in God's church. Paul says that the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of you. We all need each other. If we do not work together, we will never accomplish anything for God. Too many have "taken their toy and gone home" because they could not get "their way." As long as we allow petty matters to cause division in our churches, we are not fulfilling the purpose of the Church. *"God hath tempered the body together."* (vs.24) *"That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another."* (vs.25) We are not in **competition** with each other, we are to **cooperate** with each other. God has put us together and doesn't want us divided. Divisions have occurred over such silly things that we should be

embarrassed of ourselves.

No, we will not all be apostles, or prophets. No, we will not all have the gift of miracles or healing. But we should all have a purpose, function, and responsibility in our local church. God has set each of us in that place for a reason. He wants us to use our abilities and talents for the kingdom of God and the work of the church.

In Ephesians 4:2,3 we are exhorted to walk with *"all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love: endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."*

Paul concluded 1 Cor. 12 by exhorting us to *"covet earnestly the best gifts:"* and yet, he said, *"shew I unto you a more excellent way."*

II. Christian Love

1 Cor. 13 is one of the most poetic and beautiful passages in the Bible. It's placement is very interesting: it is directly between the two chapters in which Paul deals with the Gifts of the Spirit. These gifts are mostly public, "up-front" manifestations. And as happened in Corinth, we can be so concerned about a visible, physical demonstration in the church that we miss the inner Spiritual Gift, Love. Love has acquired somewhat of a bad name in recent years because of some who in the name of "love" have glossed over sin, worldliness and compromise. Those who have held to Bible standards of holiness have been accused of having no love. Holding to Biblical standards does not constitute a lack of love. Some "holiness" people do lack love and so do some who do not stand for any principles of holy living.

We cannot deny the necessity of love in the life of the Christian. The problem may be in our understanding of what true Christian love is.

A. Gifts Without Love are Useless.

In verses 1-3 Paul makes it clear that one may have the gift of tongues, but without love it just amounts to making noise. You may have the gift of prophecy, possess great knowledge, and have powerful faith, yet without love it profits nothing. You may even practice what men call charity and give away all that you own to those less fortunate and still be without true love. You could even make the ultimate sacrifice and give your own body to be burned and still not have true love. Regardless of what you do or say, if you do not have love, you have done nothing at all.

B. Gives Characteristics of Love.

1) Patient- (longsuffering) This is not just patience with circumstances, but with people. Just about anyone can be patient when the tire goes flat or water pipes burst, but few are patient with other people.

2) Kind- Being gentle and generous to all. True love looks for ways to contribute to others lives. It is not hateful nor selfish.

3) Not Envious- It is not envious of other friends; is not selfishly possessive. It does not covet the possessions of others. It does not hold a grudge against others.

4) Is No Braggart- Real love cannot get over the fact that he is loved.

5) In Not Conceited- (not puffed up) It does not think more highly of self than it ought. Some people feel all life revolves around them.

6) Does not Behave Improperly- (unseemly) Genuine love is courteous and polite, not rude and graceless.

7) Does not Insist Upon its Rights- (seeketh not her own) Someone said there are two kinds of people: those

that are always thinking of their rights, and those that are always thinking of their duties.

8) Never Flies into a Temper- (is not easily provoked) It is not over-sensitive and touchy. It does not explode in exasperation with people.

9) Does not Store up the Memory of Wrongs Received- (thinketh no evil) The word here is that of an accountant who keeps a detailed ledger. Some make entries in their mind's ledger of all slights so they will not forget about them.

10) Finds no Pleasure in Anything that is Evil- (rejoiceth not in iniquity) It finds no pleasure in hearing something derogatory about someone else.

11) Rejoices in the Truth- Even when "the truth hurts" love refuses to deny it.

12) Can Endure Anything- (bearth all things) It bears insult, injury, and disappointment; it puts up with other's faults and failures.

13) Is Completely Trusting- (believeth all things) In relation to God, it believes absolutely his promises. In relation to man it always believes the best of others.

14) Never ceases to Hope- Love sees no man as absolutely hopeless.

15) Bears Everything with Triumphant Fortitude- (endureth all things) It is not the spirit of resignation which sits down and passively endures hardships, but the spirit which in bearing them can and does conquer them. George Matheson lost his sight, and because of that lost his fiancé as well. He wrote in prayer that he might "accept God's will not in silent resignation but with holy joy; not only with the absence of murmur but with a song of praise."

Daily Bible Reading for this Week:			
Sun	□ . . . 1 Kg. 6-7	□ . Lk. 20:27-47	Wed □ . 1 Kg. 12-13 □ . . Lk. 22:1-20
Mon	□ . . . 1 Kg. 8-9	□ . . Lk. 21:1-19	Thur □ . 1 Kg. 14-15 □ . Lk. 22:21-46
Tues	□ . . 1 Kg. 10-11	□ . Lk. 21:30-38	Fri □ . 1 Kg. 16-18 □ . Lk. 22:47-71
			Sat □ . 1 Kg. 19-20 □ . . Lk. 23:1-25

May 12, 2024



Liberty and Power

Theme: The presence of the Holy Ghost gives us liberty in Him. The power and the glory of God is abundant and available to those who conform to His Word.

Golden Text: "Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." (2 Corinthians 3:17)

Scripture Reading for the Lesson - 2 Cor. 3:7, 14, 17-18; 4:7, 10-11, 16-18

3:7 But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away:

14 But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which veil is done away in Christ.

17 Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

18 But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

4:7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and

not of us.

10 Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.

11 For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.

16 For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.

17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;

18 While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

Introduction

A careful study of chapters three and four of Paul's second writings to the Corinthian Church will reveal his doctrine of triumph and spiritual victory for Christians. Not just the leaders of the church were to have the liberty and the power of God, but all Christians.

God does not want nor does He execute His plans to cause failure. He is not the source of problems and faults. He knows that His people will experience problems and He therefore has provided a means that we can be set at liberty through the Holy Ghost. Then we will see the power and the glory set within our lives and our church bodies.

Exposition of Today's Lesson

I. Liberty

7. Written and engraven in stones

This verse is from the pen of Paul. He is drawing a comparison to the tablets of stone with the Law given to the early Hebrews by God. (Exodus 32:15-16) He shows how this is opposed to the New Testament Christians having God's Law written upon their hearts.

Paul was commending the Church in that he did not need the Law of Moses because the church was serving as his epistle. The church also could look to the preaching and teaching of Paul for the same strength. We today gain strength from the Word and the fellowship of His saints. The church assembly is important and must not be neglected in these last days. Hebrews 10:25 *"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."*

We should also note in verse 5 that Paul was quick to give all the praise to God, lest he or the church would become proud and puffed up.

If there is any good in us today and in what we do, it is because of the wonderful liberty and grace of a loving heavenly Father.

14. But their minds were blinded

Paul is explaining that the minds of the Jews were blinded to the Messiah (Christ). He (Jesus) is to this day a stumbling stone to the Jews. They cannot see Jesus Christ as their Messiah except for a very few on an individual basis. The Jewish people are held captive (not at liberty) by hundreds of years of traditions.

Paul made a comparison between the conditions of the dispensation of

Law (the fifth of seven dispensations), and the dispensation of Grace (the sixth). He said in verse six that they were "able ministers" of the New Testament. This includes the church of today.

We know that God is no respecter of persons and if the early church had access to the liberty and power of God, it is equally available to us today. (1 Peter 2:6-9).

17. There is liberty

Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is an absence of blindness, corruption and evil consciences. Where the Spirit of the Lord is there no longer remains selfishness and sin.

Where the Spirit of the Lord is you will find Christians who are praying and living a life of holiness. They will be people who put God first, others second, and themselves last. Where the Spirit of the Lord is you find Christians who are familiar with fasting, studying the Word, and attending church faithfully.

Any person who will crucify the fleshly dictates of their carnal instinct will seek God with a diligence and an effectual fervency in prayer. It is there that you will find the LIBERTY that Paul is talking about in this epistle.

18. Are changed into the same

When looking at the Law of Moses, the early Hebrew could not possibly see Christ as clearly as the New Testament Church. We today have an even clearer view of Christ. We have a clearer view because we have the New Testament that neither the Jews of old nor the New Testament church had. Also, we have access to the Holy Ghost who will dwell within these earthen vessels.

This access to the Holy Ghost has provided us a transforming power. He

can, has, and will take a person from the depths of sin and disgrace. He will take one who is dirty with the filth of a life of sin and will transform him into a saint of God. That is liberty!

II. Power

4:7 But we have this treasure

Paul said in verses one thru six of this chapter that we have access to the power of God because we have renounced sin. Christians DO NOT SIN! If one is guilty of dishonesty or handling the Word of God deceitfully, he is no longer a holiness Christian, but has become a hypocrite and is lost.

Nevertheless, the saved have indeed discovered a treasure. We were once lost in darkness. Now we are as a mirror reflecting the light of the Gospel to a sin-darkened society.

We have not yet been glorified nor has God translated us and are therefore still inhabiting a fleshly tabernacle. However, the treasure is that the power of God is being manifested thru these earthly bodies.

If we are not demonstrating and reflecting the power of God in our worship and walk with God, something is amiss!

The power is of God and not of ourselves. We must give Him the glory for His mighty works through us.

10. Jesus . . . manifest in our body

To be made manifest means something will become unmistakably plain and obvious. Our daily walk with the Lord should clearly reflect our experience.

Those who have been born again and have the indwelling presence of God will manifest an unmistakable attitude that glorifies God.

Every time we return good for evil, we are manifesting Jesus Christ in us. Every time we forgive a person who has wronged us, we are manifesting

Jesus Christ. His life, not his death, is revealed every time a Christian obeys the Word of God. Nevertheless, when some professing Christian falls or sins without repenting, we are crucifying the Son of God afresh. Hebrews 6:6 *"If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame."*

11. Made manifest in our mortal

The fact that we are delivered unto death means that we must die daily. Our natural instincts must be crucified. That means that we must kill the fleshly dictates of our heart that tell us to do wrong. Romans 8:13 *"For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."*

Colossians 3:5 "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry":

16. Inward man is renewed

Day by day! Some today can probably boast that they have served God for twenty, thirty, forty, or maybe fifty years or more. That truly is an admirable record and one that all may look to for an example.

Still, Paul said we are to be renewed day by day. Our experiences of yesterday are gone, and we need new strength to face today's challenges.

We can compare the spiritual person to the natural body. A natural body cannot exist long without nutritional input. To go for a short time without nourishment will cause weakness. If the neglect continues, the weakness will allow sickness or disease to enter the body. Finally, unless there is a miracle and we have nourishing input, the body will die.

Likewise, the spiritual person must get regular (day by day) and proper

spiritual nourishment or we will die. We will get spiritually ill and die. It will not matter how long ago we were saved.

There is a common saying that goes like this; "We who were born in the fire cannot exist in just the smoke." Meaning that we, whom the power of God has strengthened, must continue day by day to have a spiritual infusion of His power.

17. Eternal weight of glory:

The scales of eternity will weigh our afflictions and trouble of this life to be very light as compared to the eternal rewards. When we are troubled and perplexed on every side, we can either succumb to the trials of life and die spiritually, or we can roll our cares upon Him who cares. Then the weight is lifted from our feeble forms as He bears our burdens. It is when He is allowed to carry our load that we experience the power of God.

The backslider and sinner can see a difference when a saint suffers the same problems and troubles that they experience. When the Christian is basking in the power of God, it is then that the power and liberty shine forth. It is then that we have allowed the Holy Ghost to use our lives as a mirror. He can then reflect the gospel to a world lost in darkness.

The power of God working in and through us will bring a revival to the church and will cause our loved ones to feel old time conviction. Then they will come to our sanctuaries to see the power of God in demonstration.

18. The things which are seen

Paul wrote in the eighth chapter of the book of Romans that we are saved by hope, but that hope that was seen was not hope. The Greek word "Skopeo" is used here where we read

the English word "look". It means more than a casual glance. It meant to spy out. In other words to give detailed, careful and exact attention. This is an indication of the urgency and importance we are to place on the spiritual and unseen things.

Paul went on to say that the Spirit would help us. This is the power of God when the Spirit is helping, teaching, and anointing us as we work and live for Him.

Our views and goals are not to be the things that we see in this life. Our vision must be of a heavenly view. We are looking for something far beyond this life. Paul told us in 1 Corinthians 15:19 *"If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable."*



General George Washington was reviewing the defensive and offensive possibilities at Valley Forge during the cold winter of 1777-78. There were eleven thousand troops encamped there under his command. Some were natural born Americans and others were immigrants, perhaps some had questionable loyalty. General Washington instructed Baron Friederich von Steuben to put only Americans on guard duty on a particular night.

That was probably good counsel for the sons of our American liberty. No doubt, it is important to the church, that the Spirit Born Christians are on guard duty. For we are living in a darkened and sin-threatening night. As long as we have spirit filled Saints, we will have liberty and power.

Daily Bible Reading for this Week:			
Sun	☐ . 1 Kg. 21-22	☐ . Lk. 23:26-56	☐ . . . Jn. 1:1-28
Mon	☐ . . . 2 Kg. 1-3	☐ . . Lk. 24:1-35	☐ . . Jn. 1:29-51
Tues	☐ . . . 2 Kg. 4-6	☐ . Lk. 24:36-53	☐ Jn. 2
			☐ . . . Jn. 3:1-18

May 19, 2024

Lesson
12

All Are Servants

Theme: Today's lesson will focus on the fact that every born again Christian becomes a servant. We are servants first unto God and then to our neighbors.

Golden Text: *"But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted."* (Matthew 23:11-12)

Scripture Reading for the Lesson - 2 Cor. 5:4, 6-7, 10, 14, 17, 19, 21; 6:4, 6; 7:1

5:4 For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.

6 Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord:

7 (For we walk by faith, not by sight:)

10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

14 For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead:

17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold,

all things are become new.

19 To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

21 For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

6:4 But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses,

6 By pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned,

7:1 Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

Introduction

It is true that the pastor of the church is to be an example and a leader. He must realize that when he accepted the call to be a pastor that his life and that of his family would always be under the microscope of observation. However, in today's lesson text the servant is not just the pastor or the evangelist. The servant is every "born again" Christian. Once we are born into the family of God we are given a servant's heart. We want to do every thing right and be good to every person. We see no evil in anyone because the love of Christ is shed abroad in our hearts. Let us look at the Why; the How; and When aspects of being a servant.

Exposition of Today's Lesson

I. WHY?

4. Mortality might be swallowed

One of the most important reasons why we must strive to be a servant of God and of men is to obtain immortality. When we were first conceived, our journey thru life as mortals began. The all important appointment of mortality is to die. This is an appointment that all will be neither early nor late for and one that we all will keep.

To be immortal is to never have to face death. Immortality does not end or cease!

The wicked and sinful will be forever in a lake of fire. Nevertheless, theirs is not immortality in the truer sense because they will suffer the second death forever (Revelation 20:14-15).

Paul has written to us in our selected text of the fact that mortality, i.e., "death," would be swallowed by life. That is life eternal. 1 Corinthians 15:55 "*O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?*"

The question of "Why?" is best answered by saying that we want to escape an eternal death in the lake of fire. God's servants will not suffer the second death. Revelation 20:6 - "*Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.*"

6. Therefore we are always

A blood washed Christian who has the heart of a servant has a high degree of confidence that someday he will be set free from the bounds of this carnal body. We know that while we are in this body there is a physical separation between us and Christ. Nevertheless, this is not a spiritual

separation. Because of the Holy Ghost, we are able to dwell with Him continually. Our confidence (trust/faith) tells us that this physical separation will someday end. Then we will be physically and spiritually in His presence forever.

7. For we walk by faith

To the unsaved we are most foolish because they say we present no tangible evidence of immortality. "They say" but we "know" that in a servant's heart there is evidence that only a spiritual eye and heart discern.

It is true that we cannot see with our natural eye the abode of God. It is true that most have not had an out-of-body experience and few have actually heard an audible voice out of heaven like Saul did on the road to Damascus. It is true that we cannot present a photograph or an artist's portrait of the Father or His Son.

Nevertheless, the servants of God know their way by faith. We have faith in God; His Word; His Son, crucified and resurrected on the third day; And the Holy Ghost who occupies our heart and soul.

We cannot depend on what we feel or see. Feelings and circumstances will fail us. Man will fail us. Nevertheless, an unseen faith will prove to carry us to immortality.

10. For we must all appear

A second reason for our quest to be a humble servant is that we each are appointed to stand at a judgment bar. Hebrews 9:27 "*And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment*": This verse in Hebrews is a judgment sentence that applies to every person.

Nevertheless, Paul was speaking in our text of a judgment that is applicable only to the servants of God.

Only the saved will face the Judgment Seat of Christ. This judgment is for the judgment of servant's works, not for sin. There will be no sinners present at this judgment. The result of this judgment will be the rewards (or loss of) for the works performed by His servants.

14. For the love of Christ

A third reason we must achieve the status of a servant is to enjoy and experience the tremendous love of Christ in our hearts.

Only the born again servants of God will understand those moments when one may be alone with God in prayer. During those precious moments we feel in our spirit, by faith, the arms of God embracing us. To feel the warmth of His smile upon your spirit in prayer is to know the love that Christ has for you.

17. Behold all things are new

To be born again, that is to be re-generated in Christ, is to experience the re-creation of God in Christ. Ephesians 2:10 *"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."*

This condition is close to what God had intended from the start had it not been for the fall of Adam into sin. We will never in this life achieve the full experience that Adam and Eve had while in the Garden. That utopian experience will come after we are transformed and translated into His presence.

19. Word of reconciliation

Space will not permit a complete study of such a word as this. Reconciliation is a key doctrinal word. What does it mean?

It very simply means to have our sinful past adjusted to show no sins on our record. It is an accounting term that we may see when we balance our checking accounts with the bank.

When the account is reconciled, it means that you have paid your debts with the canceled checks as proof.

We had an account on heavens books that states when Christ was offered up in our place, the account was reconciled. Our proof is the born again experience based on the Word of God.

The words reconciliation and propitiation mean nearly the same. The death of Christ and our acceptance of that fact invokes this Biblical truth.

21. That we might be made

To become the righteousness of God is more than our finite minds can fully comprehend. Imagine being made the righteousness of God! Yet, this is what Christ has offered to mankind. He who was without any sin took upon Himself all of our sin. In return we are offered His righteousness. It is when we clothe ourselves in His righteousness that we can by faith stand before the throne of God in prayer. Job 29:14 *"I put on righteousness, and it clothed me: my judgment was as a robe and a diadem."*

II. HOW?

6:4 As the ministers of God

In this case, the ministers of God are the children of God who are willing to serve God and do His will. This servant was one who was willing or was a volunteer. Some servants were slaves but the Greek word and application here is a voluntary service.

Paul gives considerable space here in chapter six to explain how we may perform or achieve the status of a servant of God. Take time to study each of these virtues for a self-examination and self-application.

6. By the Holy Ghost

As mentioned in comments to verse four, Paul has given to us some specific instructions on behaving as a servant.

III. WHEN?

7:1 Having therefore these promises

Paul has answered our suggested outline question of when. When we see the word "therefore" in the Bible, let us see what it is "there-for."

Although the Bible is divided into chapters, we must not let that detract from Paul's line of thinking. He did not divide chapter six from seven. They did not divide the original manuscripts into chapters and verses. This is a result of the work of the Bible translators and scholars. This is not to say the divisions are wrong, in fact, they are a great help to us in this age.

Paul was saying "now" that you have the knowledge of how to be a servant by adhering to all that he said in 6:4-10 and now that you have read his appeal to be sanctified (6:11-16), this is the time to become a servant.

Let us today pray for and seek to have a servant's heart. Let us first serve God and then serve our fellow man.

Paul gave added emphasis to all the points in chapter six by telling us to cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit. The flesh part of us is what we do, in other words, our conduct. The spirit part of us is our character, in other words, what we are inside. It is up to each individual to decide to turn from the fleshly dictates and serve God. There is no applied force that makes us be a holiness Christian. It is voluntary.

To be a voluntary servant of God is depicted in the Old Testament by a slave or a bond servant loving his master so much that he volunteered to

serve Him as long as one of them was alive. *"And if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free."*

They would give indication of this act of devotion by putting their ear to the door post and having the master push an awl through their ear lobe. Afterwards and forevermore they were a marked servant of their master. Exodus 21:6 *"Then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him for ever."*

Today we don't mark ourselves by punching a hole through our earlobes. However, a holiness Christian will be visible in our society today. We must be careful to only let our credentials show while in a spirit of humility.



Charles Fox wrote of five things the servants of God must conform to. They are:

FOOLISH enough to depend on God for wisdom.

WEAK enough to be empowered with His strength.

BASE enough to have no honor but God's honor.

DESPISED enough to be kept in the dust at His feet.

NOTHING enough for God to be everything.

A visitor saw a nurse tending to the sores of a leprosy patient, and said, "I'd never do that for a million dollars!" The nurse answered, "Neither would I. But I do it for Jesus for nothing."

Daily Bible Reading for this Week:			
Sun	<input type="checkbox"/> . 2 Kg. 17-18	<input type="checkbox"/> . . Jn. 3.19-36	Wed <input type="checkbox"/> . 2 Kg. 24-25 <input type="checkbox"/> . . . Jn. 5:1-24
Mon	<input type="checkbox"/> . 2 Kg. 19-21	<input type="checkbox"/> . . . Jn. 4:1-30	Thur <input type="checkbox"/> . . . 1 Ch. 1-3 <input type="checkbox"/> . . Jn. 5:25-47
Tues	<input type="checkbox"/> . 2 Kg. 22-23	<input type="checkbox"/> . . Jn. 4:31-54	Fri <input type="checkbox"/> . . . 1 Ch. 4-6 <input type="checkbox"/> . . . Jn. 6:1-21
			Sat <input type="checkbox"/> . . . 1 Ch. 7-9 <input type="checkbox"/> . . Jn. 6:22-44

May 26, 2024

Lesson
13

The Blessing of Giving

Theme: God's Word teaches the concept of giving. This helps the Gospel to be presented to a lost world. It is also for the perfecting of His Saints.

Golden Text: *"I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive."* (Acts 20:35)

Scripture Reading for the Lesson - 2 Cor. 8:2-4, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15; 9:6-8

8:2 How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality.

3 For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves;

4 Praying us with much entreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.

7 Therefore, as ye abound in every thing, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also.

9 For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.

11 Now therefore perform the do-

ing of it; that as there was a readiness to will, so there may be a performance also out of that which ye have.

13 For I mean not that other men be eased, and ye burdened:

15 As it is written, He that had gathered much had nothing over; and he that had gathered little had no lack.

9:6 But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.

7 Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.

8 And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work:

Introduction

God is omnipotent, meaning His power is unlimited. He can do anything He wants to, with or without substance. His creative powers in Genesis are a testimony of this power. If God wanted to do it, he could miraculously change the Statue of Liberty into pure gold and with that finance all the churches needs for the indefinite future. However, God's ordained plan is that the saints of God will give and give generously to meet the needs of the churches.

This lesson will consider the blessings of giving and the different forms of giving. There is no greater blessing than giving to the work of God. God blesses those who give to His work.

Exposition of Today's Lesson

I. Liberally

2. Of their liberality

Paul wrote to the church at Corinth regarding the poverty of the church at Jerusalem. He used the Macedonian Church as an example of charitable giving. He told them that although they were in great distress themselves they gave until it was no doubt hurting.

During World War Two there was a campaign for donations to the war effort. They used a slogan saying something like, Give Until It Hurts. Surely, the Macedonians had done exactly that. They gave until it hurt and then gave some more. They gave of themselves. They were in deep poverty, yet they gave.

The church works are not financed by the rich and affluent. No, the church is maintained and thrives on the offerings from ordinary people just like you.

There are many instances where people have given when they themselves were in need, and God blessed them for their sacrificial giving.

When the rich give thousands of dollars to charity for a tax writeoff, it is a business venture and that is the end of it. Nevertheless, when a poor saint gives the only money he has to the work of God, it is multiplied over and over as God's work continues. When that saint arrives in heaven there will be a payday from God Himself for his unselfish giving.

3. They were willing

Finances are most certainly needed to keep our churches functioning. Yet, there is another resource even more important. That resource is to give ourselves unto God.

Most people spend their entire Christian life asking God for things, miracles, and in general to just answer their

prayers. It remains to be seen in most people's lives what would happen if they would ask God what He would like **from** them!

We could apply the often quoted words of John F. Kennedy to our spiritual service. He said, "Ask not what your country can do for you, rather ask what you can do for your country." Let us delete the words "country," and replace God's name there.

Everybody doesn't always have money to give to God's work but everyone has something they can give! Examples of our abundance are:

- Prayer time.
- Visitation of sick and shut-ins.
- Tasks at the church property.

There is much that we can give from our liberality. The only time that we can be liberal is in our giving.

4. With much entreaty

To pray with much entreaty would be with the utmost of sincerity and honesty. A good scriptural definition of this type of praying would be found in James 5:16 *"Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."*

We need to give and receive the ministering aid and love that are found in Christian fellowship. A church that isolates itself from all others will suffer a spiritual loss. Many readers of this material have found the advantages of a fellowship of holiness believers.

II. Diligently

7. See that ye abound

Paul commends the believers for their diligence in faith, knowledge, and their Christian love. Then, he exhorts them not to stop short of the ministry of giving.

A man was defending his position of not paying tithes in a discussion one day. He said, "I give according to how I am blessed." To which was replied, "But, what if God starts blessing you according to how you give?"

We haven't abounded in this ministry of giving until we have exceeded the standard of ten percent. We owe that portion back to God, considering that He gave us all that we have. After you have paid tithes (ten percent), it is then that you start giving.

9. Poverty might be rich

There are those today who are teaching and preaching that God doesn't want you to be poor. They are saying that if you have faith you can have riches. This is wrong, false, foolishness, and nonsense.

The truth is that God's Word here is not talking of worldly wealth. Our riches lie not in the treasure of this world. We are rich beyond the buying power of currency and worldly wealth. We have God in our soul and have inherited eternal life.

11. Now therefore perform

God has given to us the utmost, His only begotten Son. Our life here is only temporary and the things we have accumulated will soon be left behind. Let us lay up treasures in heaven where there is no decay nor rust, nor thieves to take from us.

Therefore, we should do as Paul has instructed: "perform." In other words, just do what we know is right. Give to God's genuine work. Help the poor, clothe the needy, support the church.

13. For I mean not

Paul's words here are good counsel for us yet today. It is unfair for a few to pay the bills while others ride free! God does not intend for a few to pay of their hard earned dollars while others are cheating and stealing from God!

Thank God for responsible deacons and stewards who do not squander the

church offerings. Those who fail to manage God's work properly will answer to Him.

Meanwhile, our responsibility is to pay and give in faith and obedience to His Word. It will be the responsibility of our leaders to be good stewards.

15. As it is written

If all Christians would pay their tithe and give of their offerings, an equality would result. God does not need our money or our possessions. It is God's work and less fortunate people who are in need. Acts 20:35 tells us it is more blessed to give than to receive. What an unfortunate thing it is, to wait until you become a receiver to find out just how true that it.

III. Bountifully

9:6 But this I say

Some have for many years promoted a saying like this, "Givers will always have and Keepers will always need." A Christian man was very generous in his giving during the early part of this century. Someone questioned him during the great depression of the thirties. They asked, "Don't you now wish you had not given all that money to the church?" His reply was; "No, because that is all I have left now."

God has promised that we will reap. He will cause a harvest. It is we who must plant.

7. God loveth a cheerful giver

These are the unfruitful attitudes of giving:

- To be seen of men.
- Grudgingly.
- Only because the bills are due.
- For a return on investment.
- For a tax write off.
- I'm obligated.
- I made a pledge.
- Someone has to do it.
- I'm embarrassed not to give in the offering.

Notice we did not say these are

attitudes of sin. Nor did we say to abstain from giving if any of these attitudes are present.

We are saying that God loves a cheerful giver and the above listed attitudes may be missing the cheerfulness. There is a position in Christ where you may get to, that you will want to give. A position where you love Him so much that you will look for opportunities to share with others.

8. May abound

When we are so close to God that we are cheerful givers we will find other areas of our Christian experience that will abound.

To abound means to overflow or to flourish. Paul used this word twice in verse eight. Let us recap what the conditions are for this promise of abounding, by looking again at verse six and seven.

- We will reap bountifully if we sow bountifully.
- Purpose in your heart to give.
- Give cheerfully.

And then we can expect to abound. How shall we abound? In worldly riches? NO, this is not what having all grace means. He did not promise that we would abound in new homes, cars, pay raises, etc. He did promise that we would abound, that is an overflow, with and into EVERY GOOD WORK.

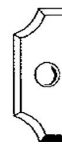
If our life and thoughts are consumed with gaining worldly wealth our motives are wrong! We are supposed to work and earn a living to support our families, but we are to seek God first. Matthew 6:33 *But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*

These promises are not that you will be rich in this world. Nevertheless,

Daily Bible Reading for this Week:

Sun ☐ . 1 Ch. 10-12 ☐ . . Jn. 6:45-71
Mon ☐ . 1 Ch. 13-15 ☐ . . . Jn. 7:1-27
Tues ☐ . 1 Ch. 16-18 ☐ . . Jn. 7:28-53

God has promised to meet our needs. If we seek God first, the things that this life demands will be added to our means.



Illustrations



In our text today and in chapter eight and verse twelve we read that we must first have a willing mind. To have the wealth or, to see the need alone isn't enough. We must in addition make a decision to help. Perhaps this illustration will help express this idea!

Teofilo ("Friend of God") said to Christobel ("Christbearer"), the new convert in the little mission chapel in Cuba:

"Christobel, if you had a hundred sheep, would you give fifty of them to the Lord's work?"

"Yes, I would."

"Would you do the same if you had a hundred cows?"

"Yes, Teofilo, I would."

"Would you do the same if you had a hundred horses?"

"Yes, of course!"

"If you had two pigs, would you give one of them to Him?"

"No, I wouldn't. You have no right to ask me, Teofilo, for you know I have two pigs."

A man received a sharp letter from one of his creditors demanding payment. He wrote back to the firm and said, "Dear Sir. Every month I take all the bills I have and put them on the table, shuffle them, and pick out six, which I pay. Now, if I have any more trouble out of you, next month you'll be out of the shuffle entirely." Have you shuffled God out of your giving?

Wed ☐ . 1 Ch. 19-21 ☐ . . . Jn. 8:1-27
Thur ☐ . 1 Ch. 22-24 ☐ . . Jn. 8:28-59
Fri ☐ . 1 Ch. 25-27 ☐ . . . Jn. 9:1-23
Sat ☐ . 1 Ch. 28-29 ☐ . . Jn. 9:24-41