

GOSPEL MEETING
Mike Collier
May 2 thru May 7

We will have fliers for the meeting with all the lesson titles. Please plan now how to get these in the hands of friends who need to hear the gospel. Let each of us vow to make a difference in the attendance for this meeting and bring as many as we can.

“Behold, the sower went forth to sow” Matthew 13:3



APRIL 11, 2010

MAKING A DIFFERENCE
Jim Stauffer

One of the admirable things we are told is to make a difference with our lives. In our country we think of the founding Fathers as making a difference. After winning a victory on the battlefield over an evil dictator they devised a form of government designed to prevent such dictators from ever coming to power in the new nation that was formed.

Many gave their lives for that concept and history says they made a difference. That difference was not evidenced in their lives but in the lives of those of us who followed their brave sacrifice.

Sacrifice is the proper term for they gave up life itself to secure a better life for those who would come after them.

To one extent or another people have done this over the centuries of man's existence. Some sacrifice life to overcome tyranny while others sacrifice a better life to enable their children to have advantages they were denied. Such things as an education, health care, food, clothing and shelter. Things that would jump start their lives and propel them to greater success than their parents. You see, if those who follow us can begin at a better place than we did, they will likely end up farther down the road than we did.

Would you like to make a difference in the world? Would you like to do something that will leave a lasting imprint on the world long after you are gone? Let me suggest something that comes from Someone much wiser than I.

Jesus said some people are the salt of the earth and the light of the world. (Mt. 5:13-16) If we are the flavoring effect of the world, that is the enticement to cause

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MEETING TIMES
Sunday - Bible Classes: 9:30AM
Worship Services 10:20AM & 6:00PM
Wednesday - Bible Classes 7:00PM

people to thirst for righteousness, we will leave an imprint on the world. Jesus says it in the negative light by suggesting those who have lost this savoring attribute are of no value.

If we are as he says, the light of the world, men will see our good works and glorify our Father in heaven. Who of our number would not want to bring glory to the Father's name? We honor and glorify His name in song and prayer daily.

Yet if we truly desire to leave an imprint on the world and to really make a difference, letting our light shine is the way to do it. Whetting the thirst of the world for righteousness would really make a big difference.

Jesus goes on to tell us many things we can do that will let our light shine. In Matthew 5:38-48 He specifies treatment we should proffer to others. We are to consider their needs above ours by going the extra mile in sacrifice for them. We are to refuse to retaliate for evil sent to us by them. We are to pray for those who persecute us. Yes, we are indeed called upon to love our enemies.

Now if we listen to the inspired words of James, the brother of the Lord, he says, "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deluding your own selves."

His point seems to be clear and succinct. If we do the things Jesus has asked of us we will make a difference. We will do so by being an example to neighbors and friends and thus teaching what Jesus was and what He taught all men to be. We will do so by affecting the way our children grow up to behave. Our actions will be perpetuated in the lives of those we know and influence. Those we know will soon become those we have influence over. We will be the leaven of the kingdom of heaven Jesus described as spreading throughout just as leavening does in a loaf of bread. All this effect, all this difference Jesus promises if we will do the things He says.

Now notice it is only when we do them that the influence takes place. It is only when we do them that we whet the thirst of the world for righteousness. It is only when we do them that glory is brought to the Father in heaven.

Finally, let me say complaining about a world that does not obey Jesus does not lead that world to obey Him. Only the example of the sacrificial life He calls on us to live will lead them to follow in our steps as we follow His.

We "Have A Name"

Concerning the church at Sardis the Lord said, "*I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead*" (Revelation 3:1). Now think, where did they get that "name"?

"Name" is here used in the sense of reputation the popular opinion. But the

smallness and insignificance of the cause of Christ in the world at that time negates any suggestion that this was a "name" in the world's Hall of Fame. The world couldn't care less. Yet, someone had to give them that name, and give it such general acceptance as to warrant significance. The Lord certainly did not sanction this appraisal; so we are forced to conclude that their peers, or social circle, gave them their "name".

Other churches, others of their professed "kind", must have talked of their "good works", "wonderful spirit", "liberal contributions" or whatever that generation considered great. It is apparent that brethren of that age were no more qualified judges of what God approves than their current counterparts. Doesn't it shake you? They had a good reputation they got it from their own brethren and it did not amount to a hill of beans (when beans were cheap). No wonder Paul said those who "*measure themselves by themselves, and compare themselves among themselves, are not wise*".

For the Lord said of Sardis, that Big Name church, "*thou art dead*". What remained was "*ready to die*". The "*few names in Sardis*" who had not defiled their garments must have stood out from the rest like a sore thumb - a few cranks or "fanatics" who would not line up with the majority. Perhaps those "on the march" wished them gone, so as to remove that source of criticism and embarrassment, not realizing that they were the last bit of salt in the whole stinking mess.

The majority "*had a name*" - and it seems the "*name*" was more valued than the truth. Well, we all have a name - of some sort - with both God and man. Our concern for what men think often blinds us to what God thinks of us - and that's what I'd call real near-sightedness. Man, a good reputation is not enough. We've got to consider who gives us our "*name*".

by Robert Turner

GOD BELONGS IN THE CENTER

In the early chapters of Numbers, we are treated to a layout of the camp of Israel. Three tribes camped on the east side (2:1-9), three on the south (2:10-16), three on the west (2:18-24), and three on the north. (2:25-30).

In the center of the camp, the Levites were to set up the tabernacle. (vs 17) Why is this so important? It means that God was at the center of the camp. And God was to be their focus, at the heart of everything Israel did.

Dad's, what about your camp? Is God set up at the center? Is He the focus of all that you are trying to accomplish with your family? Do your children understand that He comes first in all that you do?

by Rusty Miller