

THE LEXIA EDIFIER

ROMANS 14:19Let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another.

FEBRUARY 10, 2013

THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST **Jim Stauffer**

It seems we all at one time or another fine ourselves holding contradictory beliefs. Usually when that is the case, close examination will expose a flaw in one or both of those beliefs.

I still hear people make the claim that Jesus' teaching is limited to the gospels. Once you leave Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, they say you are reading only what the Apostles taught.

Here, we have two contradictory beliefs. One is they claim to believe in Jesus and thus the Bible as God's word. The other is that the writings of the Apostles are in some way less authoritative than the gospels.

Jesus planned and designed the teaching of His Apostles by sending them the Holy Spirit to, *"teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you."* (**John 14:26**) Speaking of this Holy Spirit, He further said, *"He shall guide you into all the truth"*, and, *"He shall take of mine and shall declare it unto you."* (**Joh.16:13,14**)

Paul says this gospel has at its core the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

(**1 Cor. 15:1-4**) We begin to see the writings of the Apostles as a continuation of the teaching of Jesus. Their teaching was directed by Christ in heaven and administered by the Holy Spirit as the mind of God is revealed.

When Paul explained the mystery of the gospel to the Ephesians, he asserted the Gentiles would now *"become fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel."* (**Eph. 3:6**)

It was this very gospel of Christ by which the Galatians had become sons of God through faith, having put on Christ in baptism. (**Gal. 3:26,27**) Therefore, when some began to teach them something different, Paul condemned them saying, *"there are some that trouble you and would pervert the gospel of Christ."* (**Gal. 1:7**)

Finally, Paul holds all accountable to the writings of the Apostles by declaring that God will render, *"vengeance to them that know not God and to them that obey not the*

gospel of our Lord Jesus.” (2 Thess. 1:8)

How much evidence does one need in order to accept the writings of the Apostles as authorized by Christ and guided by the Holy Spirit?

Please do not deny yourself this body of truth because of a bias and fear that it will demand change in your life.

After all, you too, can become a fellow partaker of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

Is Sincerity Sometimes Enough

Stan Cox

Christians have long objected to the demands for union and tolerance among denominational people. We have rightly pointed out that sincerity is simply not sufficient in determining acceptance before the Almighty. The claim that as long as a person is sincere in his worship, he is accepted by God does not jibe with what is revealed in His will. Notice **Matthew 7:21-23**, *"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. 'Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' 'And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'"* This verse clearly indicates that acceptance by God is dependent upon obedience to Him. He is accepted who, "does the will of My Father in heaven."

Other verses teach the same exact thing. Notice **II John, verse 9**, *"Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son."* John is stating that acceptance by God is contingent upon fidelity to his revelation.

We may notice as well that God expects us to mark and avoid those with whom He has no fellowship. Following the declaration of John noted above, he further states in verses 10 and 11, *"If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house*

nor greet him; for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds."

It is alarming that some brethren are now espousing the fellowship of someone who teaches false doctrine, or practices certain sins. Such clearly conflicts with the principles we enumerated above. However, some believe that they have found a "loophole" in the fourteenth chapter of Romans. The contention is that the principles outlined in that chapter, in which we are to, "Receive one who is weak in the faith, {but} not to disputes over doubtful things" (vs. 1), includes matters of doctrine.

Not only does this conflict with such passages as **II John 9-11**, as indicated above, it also does violence to the context of the chapter. Notice the following about the scenarios, (eating of meats, and observance of days), as revealed in the context.

- 1. Nothing is said of the one who abstained from eating meat being sinful, only weak (vs. 2).
- 2. It was equally right to eat meat or eat only herbs, esteem or not esteem a day (vss. 3-5).
- 3. One could eat or not eat "to the Lord" (vs. 6).

In effect, God does not care whether one eats or not. It is a matter of indifference to God, and therefore those who differ should receive one another. To insert matters of faith or doctrine, or things sinful into this passage does violence to the context. Put other things into the context...false teaching, adultery, immorality, idolatry, etc., and the true meaning of Romans 14 becomes clear. To say that any Christian could practice sin, or espouse false doctrine and do it "to the Lord" is absurd! There is no comfort to be found in that great chapter for those who would fellowship error. Brethren, let us remain pure!

Editor's note: Sincerity certainly was not enough by itself for the Apostle Paul as he "lived before God in all good conscience" while being the chief of sinners. (**Acts 23:1; 1 Tim. 1:15**)

FORBEARANCE

In discussing “the unity of the Spirit”, Paul exhorted Christians to forbear one another in love” (**Eph. 4:3**) Pitable is the person who feels that his friends must endorse all he may say or do under any and all circumstances. Such a person uniformly regards a recognition of his faults or disagreement with his actions as a betrayal of friendship. One with such a disposition will little by little, year after year, drive true friends from him until, old and alone, bitter and disillusioned, he will walk “the last mile of the way” to eternal destiny.

There is no human, however good or brilliant, who has not been formed of the same clay as the rest of his fellow mortals. There is none who does not partake of the foibles to which the flesh is heir. What is to me laudable pride of person may be to others arrogance and eccentricity. Productions of my intellect which are to me profundities may be to others confused absurdities. What to me may be sacred truth may be to others no more than prejudiced opinion. If I am to have friends, they must often love me in spite of my failings rather than because of my impeccable virtues.

Recognizing these facts, I must somehow learn to “forbear in love” the mistakes and weaknesses of my fellow travelers from time to eternity, particularly my brethren in Christ. Furthermore, I must learn not to expect from them blind endorsement and servile acquiescence in all I say and do. Someone has said, “To tolerate with good humor the faults and foibles of others is essential if one is to like and enjoy being with people. It is always a reciprocal arrangement. For when we choose to associate with others, we are asking them to overlook our shortcomings and to forgive our failures.

The person who looks for total acquiescence and blind endorsement in his friends will surround himself with a group of self-seeking sycophants who, like leeches, will attach themselves to him, feed on his favor and nourish his vanity in the days of his prosperity,

and abandon him in his hours of need. The prodigal son of our Lord’s parable learned this sad lesson by bitter experience. (**Luke 15:13-16**) Shakespeare, cynically yet truthfully, wrote:

Every one that flatters thee,
Is no friend in misery,
Words are easy like the wind;
Faithful friends are hard to find,
Every man will be thy friend,
Whilst thou has wherewith to spend.

Unity among brethren, spiritual friendship, can be attained only to the extent that we learn and practice the beautiful art of “forbearing one another in love.” Have you ever noticed how easy it is to overlook the misconduct of our own children as mere “childish mischief” and at the same time, view the misconduct of somebody else’s children as “juvenile delinquency”? Love does make a difference!

James W. Adams

Editor’s comments:

As we struggle from time to time to apply both the lessons presented by bro. Cox and bro. Adams, it serves us well to remember Paul’s correction of the Corinthians for the divisions among them and later demanded they put the fornicator from their midst and, “*to deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.*” (**1 Cor. 5:5**)

Combined with this strict adherence to our need to lead lives free of sin is his acknowledgement we must lend strength to others in areas they are weak. Just as we need the same from them. **Rom. 15:1** *Now we that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. 2 Let each one of us please his neighbor for that which is good, unto edifying.*

All the more reason for us to grow stronger each day and heed the instruction of the Hebrew writer, **Heb. 5:14** *But solid food is for fullgrown men, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern good and evil.*

Eph. 2:19 So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, **20** being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone; **21** in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord;

1 Pet. 2:9 But ye are an elect race, royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

Psalms 1: 1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scoffers; **2** But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. **3** And he shall be like a tree planted by streams of water, that bringeth forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also doth not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. **4** The wicked are not so, but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. **5** Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. **6** For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; but the way of the wicked shall perish.

News and Notes: Let us remember the instruction of our Lord by visiting in whatever way we can, **Jan Patrick, Mary Czirr, Terry Czirr, Candiss Cason, Irene Hurd and Wendy Taylor.**

Matt. 25:40 *And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me.*

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We recommend to you the following websites:

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thelenexaedifier.com
lenexachurchofchrist.org***

Our Meeting times are:

Sunday Bible Classes: 9:30 AM
Worship Services 10:20 AM&5:00 PM
Wednesday Bible Classes 7:00 PM

The Church at Lenexa is a congregation of brethren who have been "justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." (**Romans 3:24**)

As a result of this justification we have been "delivered out of darkness and translated into the kingdom of the Son of his love, in whom we have our redemption, the forgiveness of sins." (**Colossians 1:13,14**)

We therefore respect the inspired word of God that will completely furnish us unto every good work by speaking only as the oracles of God. (**2 Timothy 3:16,17; 1 Peter 4:11**)

What must one do to be saved?

Hear the gospel -

Romans 10:17

Believe in Christ -

Heb. 11:6

Repent of sin - Acts 17:30

Confess Christ as Lord -

Romans 10:9,10

Be baptized for the remission of sins - Acts 2:38