

THE LEXIA EDIFIER

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

FEBRUARY 24, 2013

THE MYOPIA OF "FAITH ONLY"

Jim Stauffer

It amazes me when someone takes a passage such **Ephesians 2:8,9** and makes the point that one is saved at the point of faith. Or, even as they openly claim, he is saved by faith only.

Using that reasoning one is saved by many other things as they stand alone.

For instance if **Ephesians 2:8,9** teaches salvation by faith only, **Matt. 10:32,33** teaches man is saved by confession *only*. Or as Peter states in **1 Pet. 3:21**, we are saved by baptism *alone*. Again, as Paul says in **2 Cor. 7:10**, "*godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation.*" Therefore, we would conclude one is saved by repentance *only*.

Serious Bible students do not believe we are saved by any one of these alone. In each passage the writer is simply stating the necessity of these actions within the specific context of those verses.

We all understand repentance does not come until one believes in Christ. We certainly are not inclined to confess Him before men if we do not believe in Him. Of course we would

not be baptized into Christ unless we believed Him to be the Savior of mankind.

By the same logic we understand that one who believes in the saving power of the gospel of Jesus Christ (**Rom. 1:16**) would not reject the very repentance (**Acts 2:38**), confession (**Rom. 10:9,10**) and baptism (**Mk. 16:16**) that are tenets of that very gospel.

The gospel presents a very logical process of salvation. Jesus stated clearly to Nicodemus that a man must be born again of water and the Spirit to enter the kingdom of God. (**John 3:3-5**) That new birth is described as baptism in **Rom. 6:3,4**.

Therefore, the logical conclusion we have drawn above is sound. In order to enter the kingdom of God and be saved from our sins and live eternally with Christ in heaven, we must be led by faith to obey the commands of God. Those commands are to repent of our sins, confess Jesus as Lord and be baptized into the death of our Lord. (**Heb. 5:8,9**)

For this reason, Paul concludes the grace of God will save a man because he has

the faith to lead him to obedience.

The success this false teaching has had is because it represents the line of least resistance. It is easy to tell someone they are saved if all they have to do is believe. It is when one must deny himself and take up his cross and follow the Lord by accepting the strait and narrow way that the difficulty arises.

This is the reason the Lord said in **Matt. 7:21-23**, *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works? 23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*

Speaking of obedience, how do we approach this subject in other aspects of life? Do we pick and choose which laws of the land we will obey?

If we submit to God's commands because we agree with them, we are not in obedience, we are in agreement. Obedience is when we trust Him to be right and obey His wishes whether we think it is the best way or not.

His commands will test us and prove whether we are obedient or not. Paul says this about Old Testament examples, **1 Cor. 10:11** *Now these things happened unto them by way of example; and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are come.*

The tree in the midst of the Garden was the test for Adam and Eve. They failed when they could not resist to eat of its fruit.

Naaman complained about the command to dip seven times in the Jordan, preferring the rivers in his own nation. However, he finally passed the test when he submitted and his leprosy was cleansed. (**2 Kgs. 5**)

These examples illustrate what true obedience is. Adam and Eve failed in their test and while Naaman initially resisted the command of God, he finally obeyed and the results were exactly as promised.

What we must understand is God's word is not just a book of advice. It communicates the will of the Creator to the creation.

It has been proffered that God can save a man anyway He chooses. This argument is presented to defend the position of faith only. It intends to show there is no need for man to do anything toward his own salvation.

No one would deny that God has the power to save man anyway He chooses, but the fact is He has only told us He will save us in one way.

Look at the biblical example. Peter answers the question, "what shall we do?", by saying, *Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:38)* Later in the same text, Luke records, *They then that received his word were baptized: and there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls. (Acts 2:41)* Now this example shows clearly there is a specific process that leads to salvation. That process demands the sinner coming to God must follow the one and only way God has promised to save him.

The fact that many people follow the "faith only" doctrine of salvation does not verify it as acceptable to God. Jesus Himself warns of that mentality in **Matt. 7:13** *Enter ye in by the narrow gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many are they that enter in thereby. 14 For narrow is the gate, and straitened the way, that leadeth unto life, and few are they that find it.*

The question before us then is what does it take for men to recognize the word of God over that of the blind guides they have been following?

We can only remind all men that we are the sinners Jesus died to save. What unmitigated gall we show when we dare to alter or change in anyway His commands to us. It reminds us of the attitude our Lord condemned. **Matt. 13:15** *For this people's heart is waxed gross, And their ears are dull of hearing, And their eyes they have closed; Lest haply they should perceive with their eyes, And hear with their ears, And understand with their heart, And should turn again, And I should heal them.*

Will you accept the healing power of the gospel of Jesus Christ? It can only save you from your sins if you obey it from the heart.

THE GREATEST INFLUENCE

by Cecil F. Cox

In last week's issue of Gospel Power I asked the question, Why be a Christian? I suppose this is a question that many have asked. We noted in last week's article that becoming a Christian requires dedication and commitment to God and His will. Being a Christian is not the easiest life one may live. Some have wondered why anyone would want to be a Christian. We started a discussion of this last week and sought to make the point that one should be a Christian in order to wear the grandest name on mortal tongue. It is great that we may wear the name that God has given us. I gladly wear the name of Cecil Franklin because I was named this by my parents. But as a disciple and follower of Christ, I gladly wear the name Christian, because it is the name given to us by God. And I do not desire to wear any other. How about you? So, in answer to our question: Why be a Christian? We answer: To wear the greatest name.

I want to continue this discussion by pointing out in being a Christian, one possesses the Greatest Influence for good. He is the light of the world and salt of the earth. This world is in darkness and is not very palatable to the taste God requires of it. Men cannot see their way clear. Jesus said to his disciples, "*Ye are the light of the world...*" (**Matt. 5:14**)

What a glorious power the Christian possesses. In a world full of darkness, the Christian is an influential light. Let this be clearly understood. The Christian is not the light within himself...he is not the producer of the light...it does not originate with him. He is actually just a reflector of the Light of the World, Jesus Christ. In **Joh.. 8:12**, Jesus said, "*I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.*" Paul wrote the church in Philippi and said, "*That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world. Holding forth the Word of Life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither labored in vain.*" (**Phil. 2:15,16**)

As we hold forth the Word of Life and walk in the steps of Jesus we reflect His light into a dark and dismal world.

Paul said in **Eph. 5:8-13**, "*For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord; walk as children of light: (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth). Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light; for whatsoever doth make manifest is light.*"

Why be a Christian? To possess this kind of influence. This world is lost in sin and is wandering around in darkness. The Christian's influence is needed. *Righteousness exalteth a nation; But sin is a reproach to any people.* (**Prov. 14:34**)

The power of a righteous influence is clearly seen in **Gen. 18:23-32**. In this passage we learn that God decided to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah because of their wickedness. Abraham asked Him if ten righteous ones could be found in these cities would He still destroy them? God told Abraham, "*I will not destroy them for the sake of ten righteous people.*" But, would you believe that ten righteous souls could not be found, so the cities were destroyed.

Concerning the destruction of the city of Jerusalem, Jesus said, "*And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved; but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.*" (**Matt. 24:22**)

Let each of us do all we can to guard our influence and be sure that it is a good influence. There are influences in the world that are evil. Remember the words of Solomon in **Prov. 22:1**, "*A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favor rather than silver and gold.*"

Anvil Sparks
R.L. Whiteside

A preacher frequently needs encouragement, but never flattery. If the sermon lifts you a little higher, or helps you to better understand some knotty problem, or enables you to see new beauty in things divine, tell the preacher so. to learn that he is helping others encourages him to press on.

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:

***facebook.comlenexachurchofchrist/
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