

Rom. 14:19 So
then let us
follow after
things which
make for
peace, and
things whereby
we may edify
one another.

THE LENEXA EDIFIER

John 8:32 And
ye shall know
the truth and
the truth shall
make you free.

September

21

2014

KEEPING THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT

Jim Stauffer

You are cordially invited to attend this brief gospel meeting. Bro. Gwin will speak as the oracles of God. The simple truths of Scripture will be set forth. If this does not interest any of us, we are obviously not on tract to meet our Savior in judgment.

LENEXA CHURCH OF CHRIST
7845 COTTONWOOD DR
LENEXA, KANSAS 66216
SEPTEMBER 21-24

Lessons on what the evidence says

Sunday 9:30 AM: How We Got the New Testament

Sunday 10:20 AM: Evidence Says There is a God

Sunday 5:00 PM: Evidence Says God Created Heavens and Earth

Monday 7:00 PM: Evidence says That the Bible is the Inspired Word of God

Tuesday 7:00 PM: Evidence Says Jesus Arose From the Grave

Wednesday 7:00 PM: Evidence Says the Bible is True, and I Believe it, but if I Didn't.....

Eph. 4:1 *I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, 2 With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; 3 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.* There is much for the child of God to learn about the application of this admonition by Paul. The first description of what he commands is to, walk worthily of the calling wherewith you were called. We therefore must conclude to ignore any or all of his teaching concerning this calling is to walk unworthily.

Next he modifies or further explains this worthy walk with a set of terms:

Humility (lowliness): According to Strong's Dictionary of Bible Words, this term means gentleness or meekness as this word is often translated. (see Col. 3:12; Jas. 3:13)

Gentleness (meekness) This term is closely associated with humility and is in other texts combined

with it. (Col. 3:12) It conveys the kind of meekness Christ possessed which enabled Him to conduct Himself from a position of strength, even while being mistreated and crucified. (1 Pet. 2:22,23) It is a condition of the heart brought about when one is truly led by the Spirit. (Rom. 8:14; Gal. 5:16)

Patience (longsuffering) Simply means to grant some allowance or endurance of one another which indicates a need for understanding differences. This particular word stands out to let us know there will be differences even among those who walk worthily of their calling. He will introduce areas later where no difference can be tolerated.

Bearing with one another (forbearing) Means exactly what we would understand from the translation to English. To bear with, to endure or suffer. This continues the idea of patience with one another in the natural growth process.

Love This, of course, is the love God teaches man as we observe His love for His creation in spite of its failures and general unworthy state. (John 3:16; Rom. 5:8)

His final comment at this juncture of this discussion is to *keep the unit of the Spirit in the bond of peace.* We alluded earlier to the need to be led by the Spirit. The Holy Spirit today leads us through the revealed mind of God. (1 Cor. 2:10-13) Since the completion of the revelation, the spiritual gifts of the first century church have ceased. (1 Cor. 13:8-10) Therefore, it behooves us as children of God to personally read and understand this revelation. (Eph. 3:3-5)

The peace to which he refers has to be more than just getting along with brethren as we shall see. Otherwise harmony among brethren would eventually supersede Scripture as our authority. It must be a harmony of brethren as they are led by the Spirit. Anything contrary to the revelation of the Spirit cannot be a point of harmony. When each of us becomes in harmony with the Spirit of God we are automatically in harmony with one another.

So, we can conclude at this point Paul is telling the brethren at Ephesus that in order to walk worthily of the calling wherewith they were called, they must first of all possess these attributes, learned from God, and must

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be in harmony with each other according to the Spirit of God.

Because of his statement about *keeping the unity of the Spirit*, he now sets forth some things that all must be in harmony with in order to be at peace with one another in the Spirit of God.

One body: Jesus promised to build His church. The possession clearly is that of Christ and the church is described singularly. Paul, on several occasions, equates this term body with the church. (**Col. 1:18**) Therefore, the children of God who walk worthily and keep the unity of the Spirit must believe in the one body and teach and practice such.

One Spirit: It should be sufficient to say we must accept only one Spirit to lead us if we are to be in harmony in that Spirit. It is through this one Spirit that we are called. (**Gal. 5:16; 2 Thess. 3:14**)

One hope: The calling which came by way of the gospel is the invitation Jesus offers to all. (**John 3:16; Mat. 11:28-30**) The very purpose of this calling is to attain heaven as a reward for faithfulness. (**Rom. 5:2; 8:18,19**) That hope does not exist unless one has answered His call to salvation by the remission of his sins. (**Rom. 10:13; Acts 2:38**)

One Lord: We are commanded to confess Jesus as Lord. (**Rom. 10:9,10**) That is because all authority has been given unto Him in heaven and earth. (**Mat. 28:18**) He therefore has all authority over the church He died to purchase with His blood. (**Acts 20:28; Eph. 1:22,23**)

One faith: The faith of those who walk worthily and keep the unity of the Spirit is in God. It comes from hearing His word. (**Rom. 10:17**) That word, according to Jude 3, has been, *once for all delivered to the saints*, indicating no further changes are coming. As a result, Jude refers to it as "the faith". The one that all must abide in.

One baptism: Baptism by its own definition is an immersion. But, even further, the Apostle Paul gives a graphic description of it as a burial removing all doubt. (**Rom. 6:4,5; Col. 2:12**) This is the only baptism Jesus commanded His apostles to teach and command. (**Mat. 28:19,20; Mk. 16:15,16**)

One God: This one God is the Father of us all. (**1 John 3:1**) He therefore is the only God designated as the object of our worship. (**1 Cor. 8:6**) He is a Spirit and we must worship Him in spirit and truth. (**John 4:24**)

At this juncture, Paul has admonished these brethren to walk in an attitude of love toward each other while providing them with some intransigent truths that must be held by all. However, that is not the end of his discussion. It lays the groundwork for the following discussion on the necessary growth and maturity of each Christian. He tells us Christ has set certain offices in the church to achieve that growth.

Eph. 4:11 *And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:* In this text he defines the plan. Evangelists, pastors and teachers are to *perfect the saints* and *edify the body*. It is through strengthening of the individual saints that the body is builded up and made strong. The

goal of each Christian is stated in verse **13**, *Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:* The purpose is then defined in verse **14**, *That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;* He concludes with the result in verses **15&16**, *But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.*

What we learn can be summed up in this; that we walk with the humble, loving attitude described initially by Paul, insisting on complete unity concerning one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism and one God, while recognizing the need of each to grow stronger each and every day and being willing to have patience and meekness in dealing with the differences that exist as growth is underway.

I would finally suggest to all of us as we strive to deal with these differences, we *walk in love even as Christ, who loved you, and gave himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for an odor of a sweet smell.* (**Eph. 5:2**)

Following is the first of a series Five articles we intend to present written by Jim Sasser

WORLDLINESS. # 1.

by Jim Sasser

Beginning today, we will be studying many facets of worldliness. In a study such as this, much information from different sources will be brought to bear. But, as in every study, we must depend upon the Word of God for our final authority in all things.

WHAT IS WORLDLINESS? It seems that a very concise definition of worldliness is to be found in **1 Jno. 2:15-17**, *"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the vain-glory of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world."* This passage clearly teaches that worldliness consists of (1) the love of the world and (2) love of things of the world. The things of the world are (A) the lust of the flesh, (B) the lust of the eyes, (C) and the vain-glory of life.

Of course, each of the composite parts mentioned above, have many ramifications. In the next several postings we are going to study the subject of worldliness by dealing with each aspect of it. In so doing, we hope to enlighten each Christian on the dangers of engaging in these different aspects of worldliness. We hope to be able to impress each and everyone with the sinfulness of such participation. You are strongly advised to study each one of these

postings and keep them for future reference to the subject. Do so in light of what the Bible says about the matter and conduct yourself accordingly.

Ignorance of the meaning of worldliness causes people to be unable to properly discriminate between worldliness and godliness, as a result innocent people may sometimes be accused of worldliness and worldly-minded be praised for godliness and piety. Worldliness is opposed to spirituality, Christ-likeness. There are many more things that are worldly than most people think. Such things cannot be indulged in without the Christian being led away from Christ.

We should want to know what worldliness is, for it is destructive of spirituality and damning to the soul. The scriptures certainly teach us that a Christian is not to be worldly: Notice the following points:

- A. Jesus said of Himself, *"I am not of the world."* **Jno. 17:14.**
- B. Jesus told Pilate, *"My kingdom is not of this world."* **Jno. 18:36.**
- C. Paul taught, *"Be not fashioned according to this world."* **Rom. 12:2.**
- D. James instructs, *"that the friendship of the world is enmity with God."* **Jas. 4:4.**
- E. Christ *"gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us out of the present evil world according to the will of our God and Father."* **Gal. 1:4.**
- F. James also states, *"pure religion and undefiled before our God and Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world."* **Jas. 1:27.**
- G. The saved are described as *"having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust."* **2 Pet. 1:4.**
- H. The grace of God instructs us to deny *"ungodliness and worldly lusts."* **Titus 2:12.**

There is a growing tendency in the church today to minimize the curse of worldliness. The trend is to tolerate all manner of ungodliness among the membership in order to keep the favor of the world. Too many members are trying to be in the church and of the world at the same time. This is an unholy alliance and if the church is to keep the favor of God there must be a correction made.

The world itself looks with disfavor upon a worldly church. The church loses its place of self-respect in the eyes of the world when it tolerates worldliness within its ranks. Those who are to be won by the church and need the gospel message which the church has for them, are turned away in disgust as they behold those who profess to be Christians *"running to the same excess of riot"* with the world. Their attitude toward the church then is: "They are no better than we are." They regard the church as being filled with hypocrites. Such a church can have no power for good.

The ungodly nature of worldliness may easily be seen by the fact that the devil is the ruler of such. The following scriptures will show that worldliness is under the dominion of Satan, who is opposed to the will of God:

- A. *"All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." Here we find the devil tempting Christ by offering him "all the kingdoms of the world, and the*

glory of them." **Matt. 4:8,9.**

- B. The devil is *"the god of this world."* **2 Cor. 4:4.**

- C. He *"is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world."* **Rev. 12:9.**

- D. *"The whole world lieth in the evil one."* **1 Jno. 5:19.**

- E. He is *"the prince of this world".* **Jno. 12:31; 16:11.**

Whatever worldliness may be, we know from the above scriptures that it is of the devil, therefore it is opposed to God's will. Caution must be observed when we study what the Bible says about the world, for the term "world", as it is used in the Bible, does not always signify that which is of the devil. Look at the two statements below:

- A. *"God so loved the world."* **Jno. 3:16.**

- B. *"Love not the world."* **1 Jno. 2:15.**

It is evident from a study of **Jno. 3:16**, that "world", as used in it, means people of the world; God so loved the people of this world that He gave His only begotten Son *"that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life."* On the other hand, John, in **1 Jno. 2:15**, was condemning the materialistic love of the world and its life, which stands opposed to the spiritual life of the heavenly kingdom.

Remember: the world with all of its pleasures, treasures, glory, fame, glitter, glamour, etc., will soon pass away. Paul says in **1 Cor. 7:31**, *"The fashion of this world passeth away."* We better believe it.

GRACE

Eph. 2:8 *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.* Grace is favor, sometimes defined as unmerited favor. It must be embodied in some benefit supplying some need. To be of any benefit a gift must be usable. To throw a drowning man a deed to a diamond mine in South Africa would not supply his needs, for he could not use it.; and in no sense would it be grace to him. And to offer the sinner a salvation that he is unable to appropriate is not grace or favor.

GRACE CAME BY CHRIST

The law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. (Joh. 1:17) This does not mean that no sort of grace or favor was ever extended to anyone before Christ came. *Noah found favor in the eyes of Jehovah. (Gen. 6:8) It shall come to pass when he crieth unto me, that I will hear, for I am gracious. (Ex. 22:27) And Jehovah passed by before him, and proclaimed, Jehovah, Jehovah, a God merciful and gracious slow to anger and abundant in loving kindness and truth. (Ex. 34:6) For thou wilt bless the righteous; O Jehovah, thou wilt compass him with favor as with a shield. (Psa. 5:12) A good man shall obtain favor of Jehovah. (Pro. 12:2)* But Christ brought grace to the world in a pre-eminent sense - His is specially a dispensation of grace. In Him God's grace is manifested to the world in the supreme degree. *While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. (Rom. 5:8)*
Sound Doctrine, Vol. 1 Page 145, C.R. Nichol and R.L. Whiteside

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;

1Pet. 2:9 But ye are an elect race, a 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:

Psa. 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 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 the 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.

HOURS OF WORSHIP

Sunday A.M. 9:30 Bible Study

Sunday A.M. 10:20 Assembled Worship

Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship

Wednesday P.M. 7:00 Bible Study and Worship

Visitors welcome

We conduct in home Bible Studies

We offer Correspondence Courses

Evangelist and Editor Jim Stauffer

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NEWS AND NOTES:

PLEASE REMEMBER THE FOLLOWING IN YOUR PRAYERS: GRANT CLOTHIER, J.R. DANIEL, MARY CZIRR, WHO IS CURRENTLY AT SWEET LIFE ASSISTED LIVING, AND JAN PATRICK.

NEWLY ADDED TO THIS LIST IS SUZANNE WIMP AS SHE IS UNDERGOING TESTS AND AWAITS THE RESULTS.

OUR CURRENT STUDIES ARE: SUNDAY MORNING: SOCIAL DRINKING AND WEDNESDAY, THE BOOK OF JEREMIAH



What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear the gospel - Romans 10:17

Believe in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

Repent of sins - Acts 17:30

Confess Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

Be Baptized for remission of sins

Acts 2:38

Be Faithful unto death - Revelation 2:10