

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

LENEXA CHURCH OF CHRIST

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

October
12
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ARE YOUR EARS ITCHING?

Jim Stauffer

2 Tim. 4:3 *For the time will come when they will not endure the sound doctrine; but, having itching ears, will heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts;*

According to verses 1,2 of this text, itching ears comes when we reject the reproof that truth often brings. Think about it. Do you naturally prefer to hear bad news? Most of us would prefer to hear good news about any subject when we read the newspaper or watch news on TV or just hear it from friends. In the absence of good news, the temptation is to search for a more pleasant story. Our ears are itching for something that has greater appeal.

When Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount, He issued the following phrases several times. "Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time", followed shortly by, "But I say unto you." (**see Mat. 5:21,22**) In these cases, Jesus reminded them the laws given to them not only covered their actions, but also the thoughts and intents of their hearts. They had reduced the law of God and eliminated the aspect of love. Jesus taught them to train the heart and the conduct will follow. This teaching demanded more than many were willing to accept. It was more difficult, thus unpleasant.

When our ears begin to itch, we become gullible. I remember an illustration of gullible given by Hal Hammons in his blog. It seems Sports Illustrated ran an ad for men who would like to do body paint on models for the swimsuit edition. Thinking it might be fodder for an article, he clicked on the link. Immediately it came up, April Fool! You see, people are gullible and gullible people are looking for something they want. This often leads to being hooked like a fish. It can even lead some to believe a lie. (**2 Thess. 2:11,12**)

Some people accept things other than the truth due to ignorance. Paul states this about his own countrymen and their rejection of Christ. (**Rom. 10:1,2**)

Others fall pray to false teaching because they are deceived. This usually results from those teachers who selfishly serve their own interests rather than setting the Lord's message forth. (**Rom. 16:17,18**) After all, Paul has warned us that both Satan and his angels can and will fashion themselves into angels of light. (**2 Cor. 11:13-15**) There will always be contradictions in such false teaching. A good example can be cited in the

foundational concepts of Calvinism. The following statements concerning the Sovereignty of God are taken from the Westminster Confession:

1)"God, from all eternity, did, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass."

2)"God's decrees are the wise, free, and holy acts of the counsel of his will, whereby, from all eternity, he hath, for his own glory, unchangeably foreordained whatsoever comes to pass, especially concerning angels and men." These very statements demand the conclusion that God is the author of evil and more so compels you and me to sin. If indeed, He, 'unchangeably foreordains whatsoever comes to pass', He has foreordained my very specific sin. Yes, some itching ears are scratched by deceivers.

Some are drawn toward a false message simply because of the pleasure. Paul explains this to the Romans in his epistle. **Rom. 1:24** *Wherefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts unto uncleanness, that their bodies should be dishonored among themselves: 1:25 for that they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.* We have the ability to recognize evil, but if we are gullible we can still fall prey to its message by the pleasures of sin it offers.

What is the responsibility of those who hold the truth of God's word to be precious? It is our responsibility to expose such error by contrasting it with the truth.

1 John 4:1 *Beloved, believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world.*

Should we fear damaging relationships by boldly presenting the truth in such cases? Paul dispels this with the following rhetorical question to the Galatians. **Gal. 4:16** *So then am I become your enemy, by telling you the truth?*

Both the error and the motive of the false teacher are eventually exposed when the truth is set down beside error. The Judaizing teachers among the churches in Galatia had a motive. It was not keeping the law, but rather avoiding the persecution that would come to them if they accepted the gospel in its purity.

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Gal. 6:12 *As many as desire to make a fair show in the flesh, they compel you to be circumcised; only that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. 13 For not even they who receive circumcision do themselves keep the law; but they desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh.*

Do not be disheartened when gullible brethren are led away by those who would cause division among us. Rather, praise God for the truth of the gospel that will lead us to salvation when we hold it dear.

WORLDLINESS. # 4.

By Jim Sasser

In our past three articles, we have shown definitions of the term "worldliness" and how it revolves around the "lust of the flesh," the "lust of the eyes," and the "vain glory of life." Now, we need to determine how to discriminate between lusts of the flesh and lawful desires given to us by God. I want to pass on to you an article written by D.Ellis Walker on this timely subject:

DISCRIMINATION IS NECESSARY. We must know the truth in order to make proper discriminations else we may brand lawful desires and an appreciation of the beautiful, as "things of the world." (The difference between a simple desire and a lust is the difference between the lawful and the unlawful.) There are drives, motives, and emotions which are natural and which ask for satisfaction. Whether or not these things remain simple, lawful desires or become lusts (unlawful desires) depends upon whether or not the individual conforms or does not conform to the law of God. Listed below are drives, motives, and emotions which we wish to study in the light of what we have learned about "the things of the world":

A. GOD-GIVEN INBORN DRIVES:

1. Biological: a. Hunger. b. Thirst. c. Air hunger. d. Fatigue. e. Sleepiness. f. Warmth and cold. g. Pain. h. Visceral tensions.

2. Appetites and aversions: a. Sexual appetites. b. Musical tones. c. Colors and color combinations. d. Tastes and flavors. e. Smells.

B. DERIVED MOTIVES:

1. Exploratory.
2. Symbolic rewards.
3. Working for social approval.
4. Acquisitiveness.
5. Interests and values (these are determined by environment).

C. EMOTIONS:

1. Worry.
2. Fear.
3. Annoyance.
4. Elation.
5. Anger.
6. Dejection.
7. Shame.
8. Jealousy.
9. Disgust.
10. Affection.

A careful study of the above drives, motives, and emotions will show how under God, they can be lawfully satisfied or, under the devil, become either the lust of the flesh or the lust of the eyes or the vain glory of life. For instance: let us consider the biological drives of hunger and thirst. (A drive is so called because it tends to drive you to do something to satisfy its demands). The baby is born with these drives. When it becomes hungry and thirsty its body demands that it be given food and drink. (If the baby does not get food and drink, it will squall until it does). When these drives are satisfied, no sin is committed. It is not lust for anyone to desire to satisfy his hunger and thirst in a lawful way. But the very desire to provide food and drink in an unlawful way is lust, and the desire for an unlawful thing, to satisfy hunger and thirst, is also lust.

Under the second heading let us consider the sexual appetite. Here is a desire which rivals hunger and thirst in strength. The Bible teaches that it may be satisfied not only for the purpose of procreation, but also for the mutual pleasure of husband and wife. **(1 Cor. 7:2-6)**. The mere presence of the sexual drive is not to be construed as lust -- unlawful desire. It is both natural and right for young people, passing through middle and later adolescence, to desire the company of the opposite sex. It is both natural and right for them to marry (If they do so in harmony with God's ordinances) and to render unto each other the "due benevolence" **(1 Cor. 7:3)** which each is entitled to in the conjugal relationship. But the desire to satisfy the sexual appetite in an unlawful way is lust. Marriage was not ordained of God just to satisfy the sexual appetite -- marriage is much more than that. But the desire to satisfy the sexual appetite through fornication or adultery is lust -- it is forbidden by Christ. **(Matt. 5:27,28)**.

Let us consider a derived motive -- the exploratory motive. The exploratory motive is derived from a drive. For instance, one is hungry. If he is a small baby, he nuzzles around looking for his mother's breast or a bottle. If a small boy, he explores the jam shelf or the refrigerator. If a responsible adult, he looks for a job whereby he can earn an honest living and thus, in an honorable way, provide the means to satisfy his hunger drive. If not an honest man, he thinks and plans how he can steal, cheat, lie, etc., in order to satisfy his hunger. Every covetous thought he has is lust -- unlawful desire.

these thoughts continued in No. 5 next week

SALVATION IS CONDITIONAL

Some Objections Considered

1) Grace and Works. But the following scriptures are relied on to prove that salvation is unconditional: *But if it is by grace, it is no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. (Rom. 11:6) Now to him that worketh, the reward is not reckoned as of grace, but as of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is reckoned for righteousness. (Rom. 4:4,5)*

One thing is certain, namely, Paul is not here condemning faithful obedience to God; neither is he condemning salvation by works as a thing sinful, for he plainly affirms that the works of which he speaks bring salvation as a debt. But what does he mean? We will not understand him if we do not catch the purpose and trend of his argument. The Jew claimed salvation on the grounds of his adherence to the law of Moses; some of the Gentiles, especially the Greeks claimed that adherence to moral laws and philosophies was sufficient. Both depended on works apart from any system of grace. Paul's argument is intended to convince them of their need of Christ. Depending on their works, as they were, they could see no need of Christ, nor for the grace of God offered through him.

To be saved by works apart from grace, works must be perfect; there must be no sin needing God's forgiving grace. If a man never committed a sin of any sort, if no guilt ever attached to him, he would go to heaven by right on the grounds of perfect works and without grace. But his argument is that no one has so lived, that all, both Jew and Gentile, have sinned. The moment one sins, he is condemned. If he is ever saved it will not be because God owes it to him as a debt. Defective works mixed with sinful practices can never bring salvation as a debt. All have sinned, all need forgiveness, and works cannot forgive, neither does law. Having sinned, a man forfeits all rights to heaven; if he is ever saved, it must be an act of favor on the part of God, for God owes him nothing. This grace, this favor, which we all need, can be obtained only through Christ, through faith in him. Whether there be one condition of salvation or a dozen required as a means of testing our faith and proving our willingness for God to rule in our hearts has nothing to do with Paul's argument; for no amount of works that a condemned sinner can perform will ever bring salvation to him as a debt. The sinner who believes and is baptized (**Mk. 16:16**) is saved by grace.

2) Faith and Works. To some there seems to be a conflict between Paul in passages under consideration and **James 2:14-26**. Even Luther so thought. But there is no conflict. Paul is showing that, our works being imperfect, we can be saved only through the forgiveness offered in Christ; and James is showing that our faith in Christ is imperfect and incapable of justification unless it leads to works. Paul shows that works without faith in Christ will not save, and James shows that even this faith in Christ will not save unless it works. *Faith apart from works is barren.....Ye see that by works a man is justified, and not only by faith.*

3) Grace and Baptism. *Not by works done in righteousness, which we did ourselves but according to his mercy he saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit. (Titus 3:5)* The thought here is much the same as in **Rom. 4:4,5**. Our salvation is not due to the righteousness of our works but to the mercy and grace of Jehovah. Favor is extended to the needy; mercy, to the criminal. We are both needy and criminal; needy, because we are criminal. And our salvation is not due to the perfection of our works. But some have used this verse in an effort to prove that salvation does not depend on our being baptized. But Paul is not here talking about the condition upon which God in his mercy proposes to forgive the sinner. If he were, what he says would come nearer militating against faith and repentance than against baptism; for he says these works of which he speaks and by which we are not saved are things "which we we did ourselves". In believing and repenting the sinner is active - these are things he does himself - but in baptism he is passive - it is something done to him. "Believe on the Lord Jesus", "Repent", so run the commands; the sinner is active in both. He himself believes and repents, but he is commanded to "be baptized" Baptism is something done to him; in it he is passive. Baptism is not something a man does himself; it is something done to him. But who does it? What saith the Scriptures? *When therefore the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John (although Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples, he left Judea and departed again into Galilee."* (**John 4:1-3**) Here we learn that Jesus made and baptized disciples, yet in person he baptized no one, but his disciples did. His disciples as his agents did the baptizing and a person is said to do what he does through his agents. The administrator now is the Lord's agent; and every one who is baptized in obedience to the Lord's command is truly baptized by the Lord as were those spoken of in **John 4:1-3**. Hence baptism, even should you call it a work of righteousness, is not a work of righteousness "which we do ourselves", but which the Lord did through his agents for us. "The washing of regeneration" is baptism. Instead therefore, of antagonizing the doctrine that baptism is a condition of salvation, Paul here affirms that we are not saved by works of righteousness which we did ourselves, but, according to God's mercy, we are saved by baptism, or the washing of regeneration.
Sound Doctrine, Vol. 1, Pages 148-152, C.R.
Nichol and R.L. Whiteside

There'll be no suicide bombers in heaven
None who would maim or destroy
In that land of Springtime eternal
Where pleasures untold we'll enjoy

by Grant Clothier

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 AWAITS PLANNED SURGERY.

OUR CURRENT STUDIES ARE: SUNDAY MORNING: GIVING ANSWERS TO DOCTRINAL QUESTIONS 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