

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.

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GLORYING IN THE CROSS

Jim Stauffer

Gal. 6:14 *But far be it from me to glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world hath been crucified unto me, and I unto the world.* Paul offers this as the solution to weak brethren pulling faithful brethren down to their level.

It has always been the instruction of the Lord and His disciples to encourage the weak. It is supposed to be the goal of all to be strong. This only happens when the strong lift the weak instead of the reverse.

Paul seems to indicate early in this text it is a temptation for brethren to grow weary and tire of doing things the right way. To become weary in the selfless life of a disciple. **(Gal. 6:9)** Those who overcome that temptation will do so, the apostle says, by glorying in the cross and not in our own fleshly accomplishments.

The situation Paul describes among the Galatians finds itself manifested among brethren today in ways other than circumcision. Most of us do not have that strong connection to the law of Moses. But we do have strong connections to the flesh as it "lusts against the Spirit".

One of the first things we realize in discussing biblical teaching on this matter is that man can fall from grace. He can indeed make "shipwreck" of the faith. **(Gal. 5:4; 1 Tim. 1:19,20)** Sinful man can be made to be without blemish before God, but he must continue in the faith. **Col. 1:21** *And you, being in time past alienated and enemies in your mind in your evil works, 22 yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and without blemish and unreprouable before him: 23 if so be that ye continue in the faith, grounded and stedfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel which ye heard, which was preached in all creation under heaven; whereof I Paul was made a minister.*

A very great encouragement to glory in the cross and not in fleshly matters is the mercy that was extended to us in our sin. **2 Cor. 4:1** *Therefore seeing we have this ministry, even as we obtained mercy, we faint not:*

It is then, the ability of one to recognize God's love toward us that both enables and encourages us to hold our own faith firmly but also reach out to those who are weak. **Rom. 15:1** *Now we that are strong ought to bear*

the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.

The cross of Christ was a sacrifice our Lord made on our behalf. We were lost in sin and separated from God by that sin. **(Isa. 59:1,2)** That separation from God could only be bridged or reversed by a propitiation or satisfaction of the debt of our sin. **(1 John 2:2)**

Therefore, when Jesus demands His disciples take up their cross and deny themselves, He is suggesting a sacrificial life must be lived in order to receive eternal life. What we must sacrifice is the world or the fleshly desires the "lust against the Spirit", to be His disciples.

This is the very thing the Jewish Christians among the Galatian churches were struggling to overcome. They were weak in the faith and finding it difficult to face the persecution of friends and family who rejected Christ and the salvation He brought down to man. **(Gal. 6:12)**

To those Paul offers the obvious solution, but also one that is very difficult. A solution that only a total commitment to the Lord could bring to effect. He said they, like he, should glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. The way this is done, he says, is by being crucified to the world. Earthly matters must take second place always to those of our Lord.

The Hebrew writer offers the deeds of great men of the Bible such as Noah, Abraham and Moses as an indication of their faith. **(Heb. 11)** In chapter 12 he tells us that should serve as encouragement to all to uphold their faith in the face of difficulties. **Heb. 12:1** *Therefore let us also, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 2 looking unto Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising shame, and hath sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 For consider him that hath endured such gainsaying of sinners against himself, that ye wax not weary, fainting in your souls.*

We, then, as faithful brethren must be sensitive to and committed to the encouragement of our brethren as events of this life pull and tug at their faith in the Lord. **1 Th. 5:11** *Wherefore exhort one another, and build each other up, even as also ye do.*

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

by Randy Harshbarger

It is helpful and appropriate, that from time to time, we stop to examine and question even the most basic of our beliefs and understandings about the Bible and about our relationship to the Lord. Inspiration tells us that we need to be able to speak intelligently about what we believe and why we believe it. Faith in God, Christ, the church, the Bible, etc., and more, are important elements that relate to the hope we have in our hearts. Faith is a must in order to please God (**Heb 11: 6**). Our faith must proceed from God's word (**Rom. 10: 17**). That being true, our service to the Lord is based upon faith or conviction emanating from His instructions to us. Our devotion to the Lord becomes a matter of looking to His word, and then embracing the totality of His expressed will for us. We then strive to implement that will in our lives each day.

The church of Christ is built upon the great eternal truth espoused by Peter in **Matthew 16: 16**. Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. Any act of service or devotion to God that does not recognize this fact is of no value or merit before the Lord. Yes, good that is done by someone may be of benefit to mankind or might aid in the betterment of society, but that is a far cry from acknowledging the absolute claim of authority that Christ has as Lord of Lords and King of Kings. The proper foundation for our service to our Creator is expressed by Paul in **1 Corinthians 3: 11**. *For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Christ Jesus*. No building will be stronger than its foundation; and the shifting, changing sandy foundations of men will always bring ruin (**Matt. 7:21-27**).

An important fact needs to be emphasized at this point. When we speak of the Lord's church, we are not talking about a denomination among denominations. The church of our Lord existed in the mind of God from all eternity, and as such is perfect in every expression of God's will (**Eph. 3:8-11**). The fact that we might in some way denominationalize the Lord's church is freely granted, but that is not the issue just here. The Lord's church does exist and can exist in our day and time, but only as we recognize the solid foundation of Jesus Christ. The teachings of men will produce followers of other men. The Lutheran church acknowledges its dependence upon Martin Luther. The Christian Science church looks to Mary Baker Eddy. The Seventh Day Adventist church looks to Ellen G. White. The Mormon church looks to Joseph Smith. Denominations are built upon some particular person and teaching.

The church of Jesus Christ is singular in nature in that it is built exclusively upon the teachings of its Head. Our standing before God is no better than the foundation our faith rests upon. That is why we must continue to recognize Christ as our only authority. Books, creeds, papers ("Brotherhood" so-called and others), schools, et. al., can easily take residence in our hearts, replacing Christ as our Head. If that is our attitude, we are no better than those around us 'whom

we undertake to severely condemn. Wrong is wrong, in and out of the church! Remember, Jesus promised to pluck up every plant not recognized by the heavenly Father (**Matt. 15:13**)!

Let us build our Lives upon Christ and Him crucified. Only then are we a part of that which cannot be shaken. As children of the King we comprise His spiritual family, the church. May our service to Him never be that of convenience. May our service to Christ always be a matter of conviction.

BRYLCREAM RELIGION

By Robert Harkrider

"A little dab will do you," is an often heard advertising slogan for Brylcream hairdressing. There are many people who obviously think of saving faith in these same terms, for they have nothing more than a "little dab" of religion.

An alarming trend toward nominal Christianity is increasing. It is made up of people who have become members of the church whose participation in the Lord's work goes little further than attending fairly regularly on Sunday mornings and giving financially what they consider a fair amount for "admission" to the services.

Though they are not Bible students, they usually consider themselves qualified to be critics of the preaching and program of work. While they may not visit the sick and wayward themselves, they become offended if no attention is given them while they are ill. Regardless of the fact that they are not actively participating in the work of the church, they usually consider themselves faithful because "a little dab will do you."

There is hardly a more effective instrument of the devil in destroying zeal and fervor than "name only" Christianity. It not only deceives the indifferent member into thinking his salvation is secure, it also is cancerous in nature spreading from one member to another.

Myriads of people are looking for an easy way to heaven, and this "Brylcream Religion" appeals to them. It satisfies their conscience and allows them to be saved (they think) on the "lay away plan" -- when it is convenient.

CHRISTIANITY INVOLVES DOING.

The person with this attitude never comprehends true Christianity, nor does he ever receive the full benefits of its blessings. The "pure religion and undefiled" of **James 1:27** involves DOING. The real joy of being a Christian can be realized only by "visiting the fatherless and widows in their affliction"; not by delegating the work to the preacher or somebody else. The greatest thrill in seeing others obey the gospel is shared by the one who has had a personal hand in converting the lost soul; not in waiting for others to teach them. Though having visitors when ill brings comfort, there is a more abundant sense of pleasure felt by the person doing the visiting. The deepest inspiration or edification from worship is obtained by those who participate in the singing, teaching, or bountiful giving;

not by those who have come to "enjoy the services" as spectators. Not only does the person with a "little dab" of religion fail to reap the great joys of Christianity in this life, he will also lose his soul eternally.

The Bible teaches that Christians are to seek God first in their lives. (Mt. 6:33) The life of a Christian involves daily service, not part time activity. *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service* (Rom. 12:1). A living sacrifice describes active and interested participation. It is impossible to be a faithful Christian without belonging wholly to the Lord and His cause. *What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.* (1 Cor. 6:19,20). Other statements show our manner of labor, "...always abound in the work of the Lord..." (1 Cor. 15: 58), and "...to be ready to every good work" (Titus 3:1).

"LITTLE DAB" WON'T DO

The average Christian is familiar with the above passages, but in application he tends to omit himself from their pointed meaning. We know that a "little dab" of religion would not be sufficient for the preacher or leaders of the church but through some unexplained way, we feel we can enter the pearly gates with this small amount. By inspiration of God James was addressing Christians when he wrote, *But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the word, this man shall be blessed in his deed* (Jas. 1:22,23).

Let us not confuse a slogan for hairdressing with the word of God. Hairdressing is only for the head--not for soul.

Do You Have a Wedding Garment?

By Brett Hogland

When we read the parable of the wedding feast (**Matt. 22:1-14**), we find one who attended the feast not dressed in a wedding garment. The outcome of this event was for him to be bound hand and foot and cast into outer darkness. Why was the King angry at this guest? After all, He did invite the guest to come. Was the King unfair?

Looking more closely at this parable, we see that many were invited to the wedding feast, but they refused to come to the feast. Therefore, the King sent servants again unto them and they still would not come. We see some of those invited were not content with just not attending, for they "treated them (the servants) spitefully, and killed them." Then the King destroyed them and said, "The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy."

Those invited should have been waiting, preparing for this very feast, but they were not. These should have known, but they refused the knowledge that would have saved them. Subsequently, the King invited any and all who would come to

the feast; even those who were ignorant of His blessing. The King's servants invited all they could find to come to the feast.

When the King entered He found some guests were dressed appropriately, yet one guest was not properly dressed. The outcome of this was to earn the King's wrath.

This tells us that we must be found dressed properly for the coming wedding feast. However, what does it mean to be properly dressed?

To be dressed properly, we must change those things about ourselves that are not in conformance with the King's wishes. If we attempt to join His wedding party, but change nothing about our condition, we stand to inherit the King's wrath as well.

The apostle Paul referred to the good news of our being invited to the feast and our need to change our garment in the letter to Romans. *There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.* (**Rom. 8:1**) Paul soon concludes: *So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.* (**Rom. 8:8**) This tells us, if we have accepted the invitation of Christ, we are free to enter (no longer condemned) if we change our garment (fleshly or worldly conduct) for a proper garment (Spiritual or Godly conduct).

Jesus also mentions this, when telling the adulterous woman "neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more." (**John 8:11**) She would be free, if she would "sin no more." As He went on to say, *I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.* (**John 8:12**) If we wish to accept the invitation of our Lord, we must not keep wearing the garment stained with sin, but we must put on the garment of light. Thus we will, as Jesus told the adulterous woman, "go and sin no more."

If we desire to accept the invitation of our Lord, we must change or conform our life (garment) to what the King wishes us to wear. We should not deceive ourselves into thinking He will accept whatever we wish to give Him.

When the apostle Paul wrote to Christians, he reminded them time and again to have this change in our lives. He tells those in Rome: "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that ...perfect will of God." (**Rom. 12:2**) He also tells those at Ephesus, they "should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk... and be renewed in the spirit of your mind..." (**Eph. 4:17-24; cf. Col. 3:1-4**). The apostle Peter also says, "Therefore gird up the loins of your mind...not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance." (**1 Peter 1:13-21**) The message of the gospel is consistent throughout the scriptures.

The necessity of changing our garment is not what many are teaching. This is "no wonder! For Satan transforms himself into an angel of light" (**II Cor. 11:14**), and he does not want you to change your garment. Remember, it was he who said to Eve, "You shall not surely die." (**Gen. 3:4**).

However, God's word teaches us otherwise. When we study the doctrine of Christ, it's all about repentance (**Mark 2:7**). If one truly repents, then he no longer dwells in the condition he repents of. Change of mind is necessarily required to be repentant. This is the beginning of our change into our 'wedding garment'.

When our Lord returns, will you be asked, "Why are you not in a proper wedding garment?" Remember, "many are called, but few are chosen." (**Matt. 22:14**).

Rev. 7:13 *And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, These that are arrayed in the white robes, who are they, and whence came they?*

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

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Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship

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

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NEWS AND NOTES:

PLEASE REMEMBER THE FOLLOWING IN YOUR PRAYERS: GRANT CLOTHIER, J.R. DANIEL, MARY CZIRR, WHO HAS RETURNED HOME AND JAN PATRICK. STEVE AND SUZANNE WIMP HAVE BEEN BATTLING THE FLU.

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