

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



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

December

21

2014

MORE PRECIOUS THAN GOLD

Jim Stauffer

When Peter speaks of a living hope that comes as a result of the resurrection of Christ and results in an inheritance incorruptible, he is speaking of the eternal destination of the soul of man. He further speaks of a faith that is more precious than gold and will lead to the salvation of a man's soul. **(1 Pet. 1:3-9)**

By way of association we recognize the value of our soul. It will continue eternally either gloriously in heaven or in condemnation to a devil's hell. This explains the multitude of references in Jesus' teaching to the temporal nature of the things in this world compared to the eternal nature of His word. **(Matt. 24:35)**

That men recognize value and the need to protect it is evident in the success of companies such as Life-Lock and Legal Shield. What would we think of a farmer who spent unlimited resources on an old pet dog or cat while ignoring the need to secure his chicken coop, allowing the fox to raid it at his pleasure and kept his money under his mattress? We would consider him a fool. Is this not the equivalent of the man who values temporal and tangible things above his eternal soul?

Eternal life was breathed into man by God. **(Gen. 2:7)** Jesus tells us this life is more valuable than food or clothing. **(Matt. 6:25)** He taught a rich man to spare no expense to enter the kingdom and secure a proper inheritance for his soul. **(Matt. 19:21)**

Jesus had a very interesting exchange with His disciples when He taught them about His impending death and resurrection. Peter responded by saying, *this shall never be unto thee.* **(Matt. 16:22)** Jesus' reply is the classic teaching on the value of the soul. **Matt. 16:23** *But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art a stumbling-block unto me: for thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men. 24 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. 25 For whosoever would save his life shall lose it: and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it. 26 For what shall a man be profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and forfeit his life? or what shall a man give in exchange for his life?*

We are, after all supposed to protect that which is most valuable first. Jesus says the eternal salvation of our soul should be foremost in our lives. It is eternal

and the most valuable asset we have.

Paul wrote two very similar statements on this subject to the Corinthians and Romans. **2 Cor. 4:16** *Wherefore we faint not; but though our outward man is decaying, yet our inward man is renewed day by day. 17 For our light affliction, which is for the moment, worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory; 18 while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.* **Rom. 8:18** *For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us-ward.* These words were spoken by a man who had given up a career as a Rabbi in the Jewish religion to follow Christ in order to save his own soul.

Some parallels can be drawn from the life of Job. Satan contended Job would renounce God and save his own skin. **(Job 2:4)** Even his wife encouraged him to renounce God and die. **(Job 2:9)** Job explains a man who renounces God has no recourse to the Almighty. He can no longer plead his case to God. **(Job 27:8,9)** Job never sinned or charged God foolishly during his trials. **(Job 2:2)** We learn how much he valued his soul and recognized its vindication rested in faithful submission to God and His cause.

As we mentioned earlier, a fool is the man who fails to safeguard that which is most valuable. Jesus illustrates this point with the story of two men who built for themselves houses. One built on sand and one on rock. The house on sand fell in the face of the storms that struck it while the one on the rock stood. Jesus likened the man who built his house on the rock as a wise man who obeyed His voice and the man who built on the sand as a foolish man who did not. Obeying the voice of the Lord the scriptures tell us will lead to salvation. **(Heb. 5:8,9)**

If you have your priorities in order and are intent on saving your soul, you will heed the voice of the Lord as God requested from heaven. **Matt. 17:5** *While he was yet speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold, a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.*

Worship – The Emotional Component

“God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth,” (**John 4:24**).

Every element of true worship involves some emotional component. The emotional component is not driven by a direct operation of the Holy Spirit (as in Calvinism) or “getting the Holy Spirit” (as in Charismatic practice). The emotional component of true worship is the result of one’s informed relationship with Deity.

The faithful disciple will go into every assembly with the emotion of joy, reverence for Deity and the anticipated interests in praising Deity and being edified. The true worshipper will leave the assembly with the emotional satisfaction of participating in all that God has directed, unto His glory. The proper emotional component is not contrived and forced or coerced. It is the result of one’s informed relationship with God.

One should not perform some emotional display, because it is perceived it is expected by others. One should not imitate the emotional display of another. The faithful one’s emotional response (seen or unseen by men) is the result of one’s informed relationship with God.

When the Word is faithfully preached, there should be a range of emotions in the hearts of faithful listeners (remorse, assurance, joy, the satisfaction of knowledge gained). In partaking of the Lord’s Supper, remembering His death, the emotions of both sorrow and gratitude should combine in our reflection. Singing has a strong emotional component. But this emotional result is directly tied to lyrical content. What do the lyrics mean to the worshipper? Some love music and are moved by what they believe is good music, but without any self-examination or thought to lyrical content. The emotional connection derives from content (the words in the songs), not form (harmony, meter, structure). Likewise, praying is not simply a formal, mechanical exercise. It has great emotional potential, but not due to voice or poetic structure, but content and direction (praying to Deity). Giving should also have an emotional component (a cheerful giver, **II Corinthians 9:7**).

In a lecture about this in 2005 I told the audience: Ignorance of what the Bible says about the Holy Spirit, combined with the popularly promoted Charismatic concepts can combine with the passion for the contemporary, and reduce our worship to events designed toward the pleasure of men instead of God! In this process (that may extend slowly into another generation), biblical knowledge can be set aside to pursue the emotional needs perceived by humans in their cultural context. True worship is not about competing with the modern marketplace. Our focus cannot be on drawing crowds or showing our affinity with the modern Charismatic style of worship. God is the object of worship, not the changing emotional needs of man. We must, from baptism until death, listen to the call of the gospel, not the call of the culture or religious

world.

Regarding the influence of the Charismatic movement on worship, I want to recommend that we carefully consider the danger of engineering assemblies and meetings for emotional outcome. What’s at stake here is the very definition of worship! In the New Testament, worship is not presented to us as something humans set up, so that other humans can find some “spiritual high” or emotional fix. The object is to respond to God with reverence and obedience: “God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be held in reverence by all those around Him,” (**Psalm 89:7**).

Worship is not depicted as a resurrection; conversion is! When people who are terminally unspiritual, willfully ignorant of the Scriptures and religious only in some systematic or institutional way, come to the building to be raised from the dead – we cannot cater to their wants. What these people need is conversion, not “worship” designed to meet their felt needs. When we engineer worship to answer the emotional needs of people who are not concerned with the Scriptures, we fail to serve the Lord; we give people something that can never be ultimately satisfying, and we set ourselves on the road of apostasy. Worship is the avenue God has given for converted people to show their respect for Him and honor His Son. These purposes cannot be served in any sense until we decide to follow His instructions. The Charismatic format is motivated primarily by the aim to hit a human emotional target. God’s people cannot go there!

by Warren E. Berkley via the Beacon; 5/24/2011

ARE YOU A MEMBER OF THE LORD’S CHURCH?

I hope to write concerning the church that Jesus Christ died on the cross of Calvary to establish. He promised in **Matthew 16:18** to build His church on the solid foundation that He was indeed the Son of God.

Any understanding of the church itself must be based upon the revelation of the mind of God in the Bible. Paul said the New Testament resulted from the revelation of the mind of God by the Spirit of God. (**1 Cor. 2:10-13**) He further explains to Timothy it is inspired (*God breathed*) by God. (**2 Tim. 3:16,17**) Peter then tells us the entire Bible was the result of *men being moved by the Holy Spirit*. (**2 Pet. 1:20,21**)

The Bible is composed of 2 major divisions. The Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament has 39 books and the New has 27 for a total of 66 books in the Bible. These books were written from approximately 1500 BC to 96 AD by some 40 different writers. One of the amazing observations about the Bible is its coherency and cohesion with such a variety of contributing authors. This speaks volumes concerning the origin, that is, the Holy Spirit revealing the mind of one God.

The Bible covers three different dispensations of time in the history of man. The Patriarchal Period covers the time from Adam until the giving of the Law of Moses on Mt. Sinai. The Bible covers this period from the beginning in **Genesis 1** through **Exodus 20**. The Mosaic Period began at Mount Sinai and ends in **Acts 2** when the gospel

continued on page 3

of Jesus Christ was first preached and those who obeyed comprised the church. This initiated the Christian Dispensation, or as Joel describes it, *the last days*. We currently live in those last days. (**Heb. 1:1,2**) The Bible covers instruction for those days from **Acts 2** through the book of **Revelation**.

Therefore, when the apostle Paul tells Timothy to *study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth* (**2 Tim. 2:15**), he is teaching us to properly apply instruction to those to whom it was given. That means we, who live in these last days need to be guided by the New Testament teaching and recognize that Jesus came to fulfill the Law of Moses and did so on the cross of Calvary. (**Matt. 5:17; Col. 2:14,15**)

Jim Stauffer

12 Evidences I Have "Lost My First Love"

"Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love" (**Rev. 2:4**).

1. When my delight in the Lord is no longer as great as my delight in someone else, I have lost my "first love."
2. When my soul does not long for times of rich fellowship in God's Word or in prayer, I have lost my "first love."
3. When my thoughts during leisure moments do not reflect upon the Lord, I have lost my "first love."
4. When I claim to be "only human" and easily give in to those things I know displease the Lord, I have lost my "first love."
5. When I do not willingly and cheerfully give to God's work or to the needs of others, I have lost my "first love."
6. When I cease to treat every Christian brother as I would the Lord, I have lost my "first love."
7. When I view the commands of Christ as restrictions to my happiness rather than expressions of His love, I have lost my "first love."
8. When I inwardly strive for the acclaim of this world rather than the approval of the Lord, I have lost my "first love."
9. When I fail to make Christ or His Words known because I fear rejection, I have lost my "first love."
10. When I refuse to give up an activity which I know is offending a weaker brother, I have lost my "first love."
11. When I become complacent to sinful conditions around me, I have lost my "first love."
12. When I am unable to forgive another for offending me, I have lost my "first love."

- by Mark White

"THE CONVERSION OF THE EUNUCH"

All who earnestly desire to know and understand God's word can do so. Nowhere is this more evident than in the accounts of conversion found in the book of Acts. No honest mind could read these simple, straightforward lessons and not get the point. Consider, for example, the conversion of the eunuch from Ethiopia.

This account of conversion could appropriately be called: **THE WORK OF THE FOUR**. This alerts us to the fact that four

agents were involved in the process of conversion found in **Acts 8:26-40**. First of all, we read about the angel of the Lord telling Philip the evangelist to travel south to Gaza (**v.26**). Angels are extremely popular in our relativistic society, as people are always looking for ways to validate their "better felt than told feelings." The recent movie *Michael* portrayed angels in a less than favorable light (I am told). Please note in this case that the angel exerted no direct influence on the eunuch. The eunuch didn't need the angel in order to be saved. The angel was sent to instruct Philip, and that is all the angel did. The angel simply pointed the preacher in the direction of the person who needed to be converted. Do you find it interesting that Philip never gave his "testimony" about seeing an angel?

Then consider the work of the Holy Spirit. **Acts 8:29** says: "And the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot." The Holy Spirit helped or guided Philip in his work; the Holy Spirit didn't need to work on the eunuch directly in order to bring about salvation. There was no miraculous communication needed between the Holy Spirit and eunuch. Does the Holy Spirit work in the matter of conversion today? No one who knows anything at all about the Bible would deny otherwise. The Holy Spirit guided inspired men "unto all truth" (**John 16: 13**). The Holy Spirit worked in the matter of revealing and confirming the Word of God (**Mark 16:20**). Yes, the Holy Spirit works today. He works through the medium of the Word to effect change in the hearts of men and women who will listen to His words.

Now consider the work of Philip. This preacher asked the eunuch if he understood what he was reading (**v.30**). Note the emphasis on what the word of God said. Philip didn't ask the eunuch to recite his own personal feelings, or to tell some story, or to relate some emotional experience. Philip simply began at the place from which the eunuch was reading (**Isa. 53**) and began to preach Jesus unto him. Conversion always starts with God's word; there is no substitute for it.

Last, consider the role of the eunuch in this matter. He was an important government man, and he was a religious man (**v.27**). What more did he need? He needed the gospel of Jesus Christ. He was interested in being further instructed about Jesus Christ (**v.31**). There are many things Philip could have said to this man, especially when we consider the portion of scripture they were studying from (**Isa. 53**). The point is, the eunuch got the point! After coming to a certain body of water, the eunuch wanted to know what would keep him from obeying the Lord in baptism. He had heard the word of God. He obviously believed the words that were preached to him. He understood that his life was incomplete without the Lord and so, by faith, he yielded to heaven's demands and was baptized for the remission of his sins. God didn't make him do this. Philip didn't make him do this. Neither the angel nor the Holy Spirit made him do this. He did it because he was convicted that he needed to obey the Lord. If you haven't joined the eunuch in obedience to the Lord, you need to do so NOW!

by Randy Harshbarger

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

OUR ADDRESS IS:

7845 Cottonwood Dr.

Lenexa, Kansas 66216

913-764-9170

Check out the following websites

thelenexaedifier.com

facebook.com/LenexaChurchofChrist/

lenexachurchofchrist.org

NEWS AND NOTES:

PLEASE REMEMBER THE FOLLOWING IN YOUR PRAYERS: J.R. DANIEL, GRANT CLOTHIER, MARY CZIRR, AND JAN PATRICK. LORETTA TAPP HAS RETURNED HOME. JAN PATRICK WILL HAVE A MEDICAL PROCEDURE AND STEVE WIMP WILL HAVE SURGERY IN THE NEXT 10 DAYS.

OUR CURRENT STUDIES ARE: SUNDAY MORNING: EVIDENCES AND WEDNESDAY: THE BOOK OF JEREMIAH

SERMON SUNDAY AM: JESUS, AS MOSES PROMISED



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