



THE LENEXA EDIFIER

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.

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THE VICAR OF CHRIST?

Jim Stauffer

During the Pope's visit to this continent and to Cuba it was difficult to view him as the Vicar of Christ, that is "one who is chosen to perform functions for another."

Jesus said, **Matt. 5:10** *Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11 Blessed are ye when men shall reproach you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.* When in Cuba, this Pope, who claims to speak for the downtrodden, hobnobbed with the Castro brothers while ignoring those they are currently suppressing and abusing.

Jesus was criticized for the opposite behavior. He tried to reach those most in need of the comfort the Savior brings. He sat to eat in the house of Matthew, a publican, with other publicans and sinners. The Pharisees attempted to taunt His disciples with this fact. **Matt. 9:11** *And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Teacher with the publicans and sinners?* Jesus' answer gave insight into the spiritual aspect of His mission. **Matt. 9:12** *But when he heard it, he said, They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick. 13 But go ye and learn what this meaneth, I desire mercy, and not sacrifice: for I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.*

When Jesus sent His disciples on the "limited commission", He gave instruction, *Get you no gold nor silver, nor brass in your purses; no wallet for your journey, neither two coats nor shoes, nor staff for the laborer is worthy of his food (Mat. 10:9,10).* He did not send His representatives out in expensive and gaudy garb with the intent of communicating their personal righteousness. They were preachers of His righteousness in an effort to call the lost sheep of Israel to the humble life of servitude demanded of those in His kingdom.

These preachers of the message of the kingdom of Christ went from city to city not knowing where they would eat or sleep. They trusted in the One who sent them and were satisfied with food and shelter when needed.

On the other hand the Pope traveled in luxury few of the wealthiest can afford. He spent time viewing and

glorying over the 175 million dollar refurbishing of the cathedral. He then had his audience in that place consist of those wealthy donors who enabled the expensive enhancements of the cathedral. They along with powerful politicians and civic leaders made up the cast of the scene that impressed so many.

The Pope looked more like the Pharisees Jesus spoke of in Matthew 23 than the disciples Jesus sent to preach to the lost sheep of Israel. **Matt. 23:27** *Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which outwardly appear beautiful, but inwardly are full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. 28 Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but inwardly ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity. Matt. 23:29* *Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and garnish the tombs of the righteous, 30 and say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we should not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. 31 Wherefore ye witness to yourselves, that ye are sons of them that slew the prophets. 32 Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers.*

I simply could not observe anything the Pope did that seemed to represent the Messiah I read about in scripture.

It seems apparent to me he is much like those leaders who were intent on pleasing the Pharisees. **John 12:43** *for they loved the glory that is of men more than the glory that is of God.* He prayed in public and did all the things a disciple should be about privately with cameras and crowds watching. **Matt. 6:1** *Take heed that ye do not your righteousness before men, to be seen of them: else ye have no reward with your Father who is in heaven. Matt. 6:5* *And when ye pray, ye shall not be as the hypocrites: for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have received their reward. 6 But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thine inner chamber, and having shut thy door, pray to thy Father who is in secret, and thy Father who seeth in secret shall recompense thee.*

Before you pass this off as improper judging, consider his actions versus the words of the Lord.

DISOBEDIENCE

Ways of Disobeying

Substituting:

Substituting is disobedience. It is especially easy for religious people to disobey God by substituting something for what God has commanded. The idea that something else will do as well seems to be a fatal idea with some otherwise good people. They have not a very high regard for the sanctity and dignity of God's law. In a desperate case of sickness, if attending them was a skilled physician in whom they had confidence, they would not presume to substitute for the medicine he prescribed something which they thought would do as well or better.

Cain and Abel each made sacrifices; Cain of the first fruits of the ground. (**Gen. 4:3**); Abel of the firstlings of his flock (**Gen. 4:4**). The fact that God accepted Abel's offering and rejected Cain's shows that Abel brought the sacrifice God commanded. Cain brought a substitute. God rejected the substitute.

Many now substitute sprinkling for immersion. God commanded the baptism of believers, and some now substitute infant baptism, the baptism of those who cannot believe.

Editor's note: Sprinkling for immersion and infant baptism are substitutions for biblical commands to immerse and to baptize believers. Both are examples of current acts of disobedience in religion today that are ways of disobeying God's command.

Taken from Sound Doctrine, C.R. Nichol and R.L. Whiteside, Pages 134,135

A PRAYING CHURCH

"Peter was therefore kept in prison, but constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church" (Acts 12:5). Conversions, success, rejoicing—Luke's story about these early Christians buoys our faith and hope; if they could serve the Lord in the face of great opposition, then maybe we, too, can be the people of Christ—Christians! Their faith was in the Lord. They could remember the words of Jesus: *"I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20).* But sadness enters the picture in **Acts 12**.

"Now about that time Herod the king stretched out his hand to harass some from the church. Then he killed James the brother of John with the sword. And because he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to seize Peter also. Now it was during the Days of Unleavened Bread" (Acts 12:1-3). This ruler, Herod Agrippa I, was the grandson of Herod the Great. He ruled in Palestine under the umbrellas of Caligula and Claudius, friends and schoolmates from the past. Herod Agrippa's uncle was Antipas, the man who put Jesus on trial (**Luke 23:7**). He was also the nephew of Herod the Tetrarch, the man who beheaded John the Baptist. Herod Agrippa was anxious to preserve the

peace in Palestine; always hoping to avoid raising the ire of Rome. Often in Acts the Jews sought to persecute the Christians. Now an official joins the fray. The work of God hit an obstacle; James is dead, the first apostle to suffer martyrdom.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread came immediately after Passover. During this time Jewish law did not allow trials or sentencing of any offender. So Peter was put in prison; a trial and death were soon to come. Clearly, Herod did not want Peter to escape; four squads of soldiers (sixteen in all) were assigned to guard this "notorious fisherman." Was the situation hopeless? What will happen to Peter? How can these Christians resist the mighty power of Rome? There were two powers at work. Rome had political and military might; God's people had faith and prayer. What did the Christians do?

They prayed. Did they remember that earlier, after John and Peter were released from prison, that they prayed to God (**Acts 4:23ff**)? Soon the apostles were imprisoned again, only to have an angel release them from their jail cells (**Acts 5:19**). Would that happen this time? Whatever they may have remembered, their prayers now "were constant." They were following the Lord's example when He was in Gethsemane. **Luke 22:44** says *"And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly."*

Luke doesn't say if Peter was experiencing any anxiety about being in jail. Was Peter a "sound sleeper?" How did sleep come when he was tied to two soldiers? Again, an angel stepped in, releasing Peter from his bonds. Peter said this is the Lord's will; *"The Lord sent His angel" (Acts 12:11)*. At Mary's house, many were still praying. Specifically, what did they pray for? Luke doesn't tell us. Did they pray that Peter would have a peaceful time to die? Did they pray for his release? We may wonder about their reaction to Peter's sudden appearance. Whatever our musings might be, the church was praying, Peter was alive, and the gospel continued to go forth. *"The word of God grew and multiplied" (Acts 12:24).*

Randy Harshbarger

MULES, GRUDGES, AND BITTERNESS

A farmer leaned on the fence, which separated his farm from his neighbor's adjoining field. He watched while his neighbor plowed his old mule with sullen difficulty.

The farmer stood there watching his neighbor's misery until he could take it no longer. "I don't like to tell a fella his business, but if you would speak to that there mule it would make your job much easier," spoke the farmer. "Seems to me that pulling on the reins like you do only confuses the mule and makes you mad. Just tell

him 'gee' and 'haw' and see if he don't do a lot better."

The neighbor took the reins from around his shoulders, pulled a big square red handkerchief from his hip pocket and wiped the inside of his straw hat. He then looked kinda squint eyed and said, "Reckon you're right neighbor, but this here animal kicked me five years ago and I ain't spoke a word to him since."

How we relate to people is an important element in our Christian lives. Christians cannot claim Christ-like character if they bear grudges. Can you imagine Peter becoming so upset with our Lord because He called him Satan (**Matthew 16:23**) that he refused to ever speak to Him again?

Holding a grudge has become a life-long project for some. They can remember every unkind word that was spoken to them. They dwell upon the way they were mistreated and make a pact with themselves never to forgive. Their attitude is one that says, now you've hurt me and you must pay. The grudge bearer fails to understand that grudges don't hurt others nearly as much as they hurt him.

A way in which one hurts themselves is that bearing a grudge produces bitterness which in turn clouds the judgement. When this happens, the grudge bearer will always be 'against' the one to whom they are bitter. They will put the worst interpretation possible upon the words or actions of their foe, and will at every opportunity, engage in pettifoggery.

In dealing with God's acceptance of the Gentiles and that the Jewish Christian should do the same, Paul wrote, *"Wherefore receive ye one another, even as Christ also received you, to the glory of God"* (**Romans 15:7**).

Another way is the time and energy it takes to maintain a grudge. Time that could and should be used to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord. Instead, the grudge holder occupies their thought processes with the real or imagined, the intentional or unintentional hurts of their foe. The Christian is to direct his thoughts on things which edify (**Philippians 4:8**).

"Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and railing, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, even as God also in Christ forgave you" (**Ephesians 4:31-32**).

In speaking of bitterness, Walter N. Henderson wrote, *"Bitterness will cause one to lie; (Rom. 3:13,14); it will even cause one to lie against the truth according to Jas. 3:14"*. Why? Because the one possessed with bitterness cannot see the truth in all of its beauty for he looks at it through jaundiced eyes.

Many great men, preachers of power, and faithful saints of God have been destroyed because they let Satan fill their hearts with bitterness, and they refused to put it away as the Scripture instructed them to do. Asa, a great king, let bitterness mar an almost perfect life. (**2 Chron. 16:12**). Don't let this happen to you; I must guard against it too.

The plowing of his field was made difficult because the neighbor held a grudge and was bitter. The

Christian's life is made unfulfilling and his soul is lost when he holds a grudge that in turn harbors bitterness. Isn't it time to speak to the mule in your life?

By Glen Young via Road Creek Bulletin

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IS NOT A SECT

Jesus, the Son of God, said, *"I will build My church..."* (**Mt. 16:13-19**). This church, which He built and which you read about in the New Testament, was never designed to be a sect. It was not planned to be a part of Judaism, nor of Islam, nor of Catholicism, nor a part of anything else.

Jesus said, *"Behold, I make all things new"* (**Rev. 21:5**). He did not come into this world to *"Put a new patch on an old garment"* (**Mk. 2:21**), but to be the Mediator of the New Testament which is based on a better sacrifice and better promises than those of the Old Testament: *"He is the Mediator of a better covenant, which hath been enacted upon better promises"* (**Heb. 8:6**). Jesus died on the cross of Calvary to establish the New Testament (**Heb. 9:15,16**), and thereby paid the purchase price for His church: *"Which He purchased with His own blood"* (**Acts 20:28**). The Jews thought of the church as just another sect, but Paul showed that the church is not a sect: *"After the Way which they call a sect, so serve I the God of our fathers"* (**Acts 24:14**).

There are many today who consider that same church to be a sect or "denomination." But Jesus never built a sect, a denomination, nor has He ever authorized one to be built. There is not a name nor description of any sect, or denomination in the New Testament. Jesus prayed for the unity of all believers, (**Jno. 17:20,21**), and all of these believers are to be in one body, one church (**Eph. 1:22,23; 2:14-16; Col. 1:18,24**). The Holy Spirit guided apostle Paul commanded, *"Let there be no division among you"* (**1 Cor. 1:10**).

That church of the New Testament was not a sect then, and it is not a sect now. The allegation in the first century that it was a sect did not make it one, and the same allegation today does not make it one.

By Bill Cavender in Centerview Tidings, Vol. 20, No. 44, Nov. 27, 2005.

How does the idea of the Pope being the extension of the apostles and the Vicar of Christ fit with Jesus' attitude of service rather than glorifying himself?

Luke 22:24 *And there arose also a contention among them, which of them was accounted to be the greatest. 25 And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles have lordship over them; and they that have authority over them are called Benefactors. 26 But ye shall not be so: but he that is the greater among you, let him become as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. 27 For which is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am in the midst of you as he that serveth.*

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, AND JAN PATRICK.

STEVE WIMP IS STILL IN SHAWNEE MISSION HOSPITAL.

BIBLE CLASSES: SUNDAY: GOSPEL OF JOHN - RON PECK - WEDNESDAY: THE THEME OF THE BIBLE - JIM STAUFFER



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