

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”

May 15, 2016

How To Handle Oracles of God

Jim Stauffer

1 Pet. 4:11 *whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.*

In the context of discipleship, Peter says one who speaks should speak the *oracles* of God. That is one who teaches others how to conduct themselves before God in heaven should use His own words to teach. There are many very good reasons to justify this instruction, but Peter says one reason is that God would receive the glory. He goes on in the text to say we serve with the strength that God gives. All this to be certain man does not assume authority over God's word and replace His instruction to them.

We learn from the Mounce Greek Dictionary the word *logion* means, *an oracle, a divine communication or revelation*. Every time it is used in the New Testament it refers to words God had given man to guide him in the service of the Lord.

In **Acts 7:38,39**, Stephen credits Moses with having received living *oracles* from God at Sinai to give to Israel. The nation subsequently refused to follow his instruction to carry out the expressed will of God who gave those oracles.

Paul explains the descent of man into sin as unfaithfulness to the *oracles* of God in **Rom. 3:2,3**. God, who is innately righteous has granted His instruction, that is, His oracles, to every generation of man to guide them in the paths of righteousness. Yet repeatedly as we begin to see from these texts, man opts for an easier way which offers more satisfaction to his personal whims. This Paul says has caused all men to sin and that there is none righteous on his own before God.

The Hebrew writer laments the fact that many have never sufficiently learned the very fundamental principles of the *oracles* of God to teach them to others (**Heb. 5:12**). He implies the child of God should have the necessary desire for God's message to motivate him

to search it and understand it as completely as possible to better serve His Lord.

It is then nothing new when we see men who reject the *oracles* of God today because they are unwilling to accept the discipline.

It is therefore obvious to anyone who has a basic understanding of the *oracles* of God, that a *nation* that not only allows but advocates such things as abortion, homosexuality and transgender conduct, has forsaken the ideal of being a *nation under God*.

We want to call attention to such things as they can and will affect the lives of godly men in a world dominated by ungodly men.

But just as apparent is the failure of *religious bodies* in our nation to respect God's word and speak only His *oracles* as the authority for their conduct.

Long ago many denominations decided to depart from the long held standards of the church of the New Testament to limit their work and worship to those things authorized by His *oracles*. They rejected the concept expressed by Paul to Timothy that, *All scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for reproof, correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.* (**2 Tim. 3:16,17**)

Once they took that step and began to worship with instrumental instruments, to sprinkle for baptism instead of immersion and even to conclude one could be saved without baptism by faith only they became socially led rather than being led by the Spirit.

Now we have so called houses of worship that have concluded homosexual unions are acceptable. They have gone so far as to appoint homosexuals as religious leaders in religions that claim to worship God and follow Christ, who denounce such as immorality.

When will they look behind them to see the wake they have left in their move away from the *oracles* of God? When will they admit their sin? Hopefully before Jesus comes to claim His own (**1 Cor. 15:23**).

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW

In contrast to Mark, Luke, and John, Matthew begins his gospel with the genealogy of Jesus Christ. **Matthew 1:1**, *“The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham,”* paves the way for Matthew’s use of OT prophecies that are fulfilled in the life of Jesus. Jesus is the Son of Abraham; in Abraham all nations would be blessed (**Genesis 22:18**). Matthew opens and closes his gospel with Jesus. The Great Commission (**Matthew 28:16-20**) was for all nations. Did the visit of the Magi from the East portend the inclusion of Gentiles, too, into the kingdom of heaven? Judaism, including Herod, the chief priests and scribes, yea, finally, all Jerusalem rejected Jesus the Messiah (**Matthew 23:37**). The Gentiles (*“other sheep”* **John 10:16**) too, could be blessed through Abraham’s seed.

Still, the gospel was for the Jew first and then the Gentile (**Romans 1:16**). With a Jewish audience in mind, Matthew points to fulfilled prophecy. **Matthew 1:1** links Jesus, the Christ or Messiah, with David and Abraham. Note **Matthew 1:17**: *“So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations, from David until the captivity in Babylon are fourteen generations, and from the captivity in Babylon until the Christ are fourteen generations.”* It is possible (likely cf. **Psalms 119**) that Matthew divides his genealogy into three sections of fourteen generations each as a memory device. In Bible times letters formed words; letters were also assigned numerical value. For example, David in the Hebrew language has a numerical value of fourteen ($DVD = 4+6+4 = 14$). So, by using this symbolical device, Matthew says that the Messiah, Jesus the Christ, the Son of David, has come.

Jesus is the long-awaited Messiah; Matthew wants his readers to understand what kind of Messiah He is. Jesus would disappoint those who longed for a military leader—one that would free the nation of Israel from Roman domination; especially would he disappoint the Pharisees. He would be the suffering Messiah—the one who would die to deliver all from sin. *“The kingdom of heaven”* takes precedence over all earthly kingdoms and concerns. God is sovereign over His world; it is His plan for His Son to die for all. So, followers of God’s Son serve the Savior. Allegiance belongs only to King Jesus. Having entered the kingdom, one’s ethics change. Greatness among men is eschewed. Demanding one’s rights prevents one from emulating the actions of the true Servant of all.

After spending nearly two and one-half years with Jesus, being schooled by the Master Teacher, the disciples heard Jesus say that He soon would die. *“From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day”* (**Matthew 16:21**). Jesus would not sit on a throne in Jerusalem; He would

hang from a cross. Now, do you really want to read the Gospel of Matthew?

Randy Harshbarger

“Two-Sided Coins”

The saying “there are two sides to every coin” is famous for its applications to situations in which two or more “sides” must be considered. Among the analogies this saying relates to is the “balancing” of principles that, if taken beyond what God intends, can work against one another.

With these principles, we must thoughtfully study both “sides of the coin.” For example, consider the need for Christians to be:

Patient but Prepared

2 Peter 3:9 points out the patience God has with mankind, but the next verse assures that *“the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night.”* Together, these two verses answer the scoffing of verse 4, saying that the earth still exists because God is longsuffering, but we can be assured it will not last forever.

But these verses also demonstrate the need for us to exercise both patience and a sense of urgency. We must have a patient mindset when waiting for Christ (**2 Peter 3:8**). We must be patient in our circumstances (**2 Thessalonians 1:4**) and when interacting with others (**Ephesians 4:2**).

Yet, patience must not be confused with procrastination. We must prepare for judgment with a sense of urgency (**2 Corinthians 5:10**) and exhort others to do the same (cf. **Acts 22:16**).

This has particular application to the growing process of Christians. We cannot expect ourselves or others to be perfect, but at the same time must encourage immediate action when something needs to be corrected.

Open-minded but Steadfast

1 Corinthians 15:58 says we must be *“steadfast, immovable...”* What this verse does not say is “resist all change.” Yes, we are to resist false teaching (**2 Timothy 4:2-5**), but our lives should be *constantly* changing as we are molded into what God desires (**2 Peter 3:18**). Furthermore, not every challenge to our beliefs is false teaching. If we reach the point that we believe we have every answer to every question about the Bible, we prove that we still have a lot to learn (**1 Corinthians 8:2**). The wisdom that comes from God is *“willing to yield”* (**James 3:17**). Wise people are open-minded and do not (mis)use teachings of steadfastness as an excuse for resisting needed change.

Truly wise people are steadfast though. Instead of being easily *“tossed to and fro”* (**Ephesians 4:14**), we must hold fast to the teachings of the Bible that we have studied enough to reach a firm conclusion on. For the

Christians to whom **1 Corinthians 15:58** is directly addressed, this meant not wavering in their faith in the resurrection.

The key to this “coin” is that we must desire the truth and never desire to prove our presumptions right. Having this desire will lead us to be both steadfast and open-minded.

Zealous but Cautious

Many of God’s commands focus on what to do, while many others focus on what not to do. If either group of commands is emphasized more than the other, we can get ourselves in trouble.

Consider all of the passages that warn against false teaching. **James 3:1** says *“let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.”* Yet, **2 Timothy 2:2** says *“the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.”*

These two passages have different contexts. Taken together though they point out that we should be zealous to teach others, but cautious that we do not teach false doctrine.

In like manner, we should be zealous for all good works (**Titus 2:14**), yet take caution that our zeal is according to knowledge (cf. **Romans 10:2**). We must be eager to follow the “do’s,” but cautious to avoid the “do not’s.”

Evangelistic but Holy

Zeal for teaching others should include zeal for teaching those lost in sin (cf. **Acts 8:4**).

There can be a temptation to set ourselves apart from the world by trying to remove ourselves from any who might tempt us to do evil. If we were serious about this, we would have to leave the world entirely (**1 Corinthians 5:10**).

Such would be dismissing our God-given responsibilities though. God expects us to reach out to the lost, and we can’t do that by running from sinners. As Jesus responded to the Jewish leaders who criticized Him for eating with sinners, *“those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick”* (**Luke 5:31**).

With that said, there is no question that *“evil company corrupts good habits”* (**1 Corinthians 15:33**). As **Proverbs 13:20** says, *“He who walks with wise men will be wise, but the companion of fools will be destroyed.”*

We must be seeking to influence the lost for good, but also taking heed that we are not in dangerous environments that will pull us strongly in Satan’s direction.

Peacemaking but Sincere

Jesus taught *“blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God”* (**Matthew 5:9**). The Holy Spirit through Paul taught *“if it be possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men”* (**Romans 12:18**).

Yet, the Holy Spirit also taught *“let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good”* (**Romans 12:9**).

Jesus didn’t seek conflict, but He did not compromise the truth in order to avoid it.

An example of this is seen in Jesus’ reprimanding of the Pharisees who taught their traditions as doctrine (**Matthew 15:9**). Trivial differences among brethren can often be addressed without having to correct a brother’s viewpoint (cf. **Romans 14**). Teaching man’s traditions as God’s doctrine is a different story.

We must be considerate and reasonable when dealing with differences (cf. **1 Corinthians 8:13**), but at the same time sincere. We do not show sincere love by patting others on the back for following man’s “gospel.” Rather, we show sincere love by courageously pointing out the need to follow God’s Gospel (**Galatians 1:6-9**).

We must be peacemakers, but do so with a sincere desire for all to follow the truth.

These examples barely scratch the surface of “two-sided coins.” We must make sure that we pay attention to both sides of every “coin” and do not take one side too far at the expense of another.

When we see the complete coin, we realize that God’s commands do not oppose one another, but rather complement and promote one another. We must examine the entire picture to ensure we are following all of what God commands, and being the complete Christians he deserves and desires.

Michael Hickox, The Sincere Milk of the Word

Do Not Neglect Your Calling

Paul reminds us of our calling and the need to remain true to it. **Eph. 4:1** *I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beseech you to walk worthily of the calling wherewith ye were called.*

Summer time is just around the corner and vacations for many brethren will take up a certain segment of the next 3 months or so. As we attempt to walk worthily of our calling it is imperative that our service to God be the centerpiece of our lives when on vacation, just as it is when we are home.

It is true, no one will know the difference when we fail to assemble for worship in a place we are not known. But, of course, God will (**Heb. 4:13**). He *has called us out of darkness into his marvelous light* (**1 Pet. 2:9**).

If, indeed, we truly believe in the one body, one Spirit, one hope, one faith and one baptism, we will submit to the one Lord and one God and Father of all whenever and wherever we are. Our prayer is for the safety and faithfulness of our brethren this season.

Jim Stauffer

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.

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Sunday A.M. 9:30 Bible Study

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Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship

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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