

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”

June 19, 2016

IS MY HEART WHERE IT SHOULD BE?

Jim Stauffer

Matt. 6:33 *But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.*

Luke 18:7 *And will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? 8 I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?”*

These two verses promise those who are faithful to God will be cared for in every way needed. God has always cared for His people, just as He promised to do. He told them in the days of Moses to teach His words to their children to avoid having other gods before Him. In return, He would deliver them into a land filled with good things left behind by its previous occupants which they were to drive out as He empowered them.

The ability to trust in God's promises and to be content with what He provides has long been the challenge for man. It is such trust that enables us to live in happiness and contentment here on earth and to devote ourselves to service in His kingdom.

A failure to have this confidence in Him results in man trying to provide for himself. He learns he can actually obtain greater riches or security or even what he perceives as greater justice if he pursues it on his own.

The wise man has identified this effort and its emptiness. **Eccl. 1:14** *I have seen everything that is done under the sun, and behold, all is vanity and a striving after wind.* We understand how this worked out for Israel. They rejected the wisdom of God. They were not satisfied with what He provided for them. As a result they embraced much of the worldliness around them. They took pleasure in the fulfillment of lust allowed by idolatrous worship and eventually were found in bondage to sin and other nations as they had been in Egypt.

The rich man of **Luke 12** learned the lesson this way. Once he had chosen to lavish his riches on himself rather than trust God and use them to help others, he learned, *But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul*

is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?’

We spend far too much time anxious over wealth and far too little time concerned over the souls of others who have yet to decide to trust in and obey the Lord.

Our nation is currently very concerned over security from those who will do us harm. That task does not fall to the child of God. There are authorities ordained of God for the purpose of resisting evil aimed at its citizens. What we should concern ourselves with is the attitude we are told to have toward evil. It is not our assigned service in the kingdom to perpetrate vengeance on evil men. God says He will do that. Listen to both our role and God's in such situations. **Rom. 12:17** *Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. 18 If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. 19 Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.” 20 To the contrary, “if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.”*

It is not ignorance of this teaching that troubles the child of God, but rather learning to ignore the influence of the world which teaches us to seek what we perceive to be in our best interest.

This, in spite of our knowledge to the contrary is the greatest difficulty we face. We must truly *be transformed by the renewing of our minds* (**Rom. 12:2**) in order to equip ourselves to meet this challenge.

It is a difficult thing to do. It is, however, such things as this, that are a part of shedding the light of the gospel on a world of darkness.

The difficult path of the child of God requires daily prayer in search of the strength and wisdom to endure. But that way will bring rewards immeasurable. **Rom. 8:18** *For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.*

How to Avoid Spiritual Failure

Paul Earnhart

In his final hours in Rome, a very lonely apostle Paul suffered some additional heartbreak. “*Demas,*” he wrote, “*hath forsaken me, having loved this present world*” (2 Timothy 4:10). We are left to speculate as to the particulars—what dread fears or powerful allurements led this faithful friend and co-worker to abandon the kingdom of God and to forsake his burdened brother. It was not as though he had fled the field at the first approach of trouble. During Paul’s first imprisonment in Rome Demas had evidently been a steadfast companion (Philemon 24; Colossians 4:14). Now, unexpectedly, this heart—mauling betrayal and desertion. Only those who have had a trusted companion in Christ to suddenly turn from God and run for the world can understand, it can numb the spirit.

What is it that can cause one who has invested so much in the kingdom to abandon everything? Some fade early because they have little understanding of the calling of God and even less commitment. The first approach of temptation and hardship devastates them (Luke 8:13). Others seem to have a deep commitment to righteousness but not an absolute one. Their price for betrayal is high but they have one nonetheless, and when it gets high enough they run. The wealthy young ruler who came to Jesus was like that. He was willing to give up a lot, but not everything (Matthew 19:16-23). Paul said that Demas “*loved this present world.*” The “world” is many things. John describes it as a way of thinking where lust, materialism and pride abound (1 John 2:15-16). What was it that got to the faithful Demas? Was it fear of death or imprisonment? Or was it something more subtle like a nostalgic longing for the old easy ways free of constant unabating warfare? We are not told which one of these undid Demas but one of them found its mark. Breaking points can come to us too if we are not very careful. A deep hurt we cannot find it in ourselves to forgive. Failures with our children. Lost health or prosperity. Anything we had never imagined happening to us. And often it’s just plain prideful stubbornness. At any rate, don’t ever say you’d never do what others have done. Peter learned a valuable lesson about that (Matthew 26:31-35). It is far better that we know our own weaknesses and watch and pray that we enter not into temptation (Matthew 26:41). Satan loves an arrogant and self—confident man.

Another lesson to be learned from the failure of others is that those who at last go back, at first look back. Departures of apparent suddenness are really the end of a process. Our Lord warned that those who put their hand to the kingdom plow and look back longingly at the world are not fit for the kingdom of God (Luke 9:62). The disciples who go back are those who first begin to cultivate again the values of the world and like the Israelites in the wilderness grow nostalgic amidst their trials Egypt. They forget, of course, the galling

bondage that accompanies the life of sin. These are the ones who gradually cease to meditate upon God’s word (Psalm 1:1-2), then become prayerless (James 4:1-2) as God and Christ seem far away. First men cease to study, then to pray, and, finally, to care. Sometimes this all begins as a few little compromises dismissed as harmless. Too much time with worldly companions (1 Corinthians 15:33), too much interest in a job (1 Tim. 6:9,10), too much concern with being accepted and making our mark in the world (1 Peter 5:5). Finally, it makes us heedless of the injury we do to our Savior, ourselves and others.

Satan is the master of the “short step” method. Slow change is more effective in producing spiritual collapse than sudden departure. The danger of alerting the victim to what is happening is eliminated. We can be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin (Hebrews 3:12-13). Warning flags need to start flying the moment we feel the slightest ebb in commitment. Beware the spiritual slow leak. The unfailing answer to this kind of spiritual failure is the daily discipline of an uncompromising dedication which admits of no exceptions and makes quick and humble redress for every transgression. Burn all your bridges and press on to the heavenly mark (Philippians 3:7-14). And if, in spite of everything, you happen to stumble badly, don’t let despair destroy you. Remember that everyone who has faltered has not ultimately fallen. We can all thank God for that. John Mark’s disgraceful desertion in Pamphylia (Acts 13:13) was not the end of him because he didn’t allow it to be. Paul sent for him during his last hours (2 Timothy 4:11) and the Holy Spirit chose him to record the gospel story. We don’t have to be like Demas. In the mercy of God we have the privilege of being like John Mark or Peter, and, yes, even Paul.

Taken from the website of The East End church of Christ, Lexington, Ky.

OT PASSAGES IN MATTHEW 2

Prophecy is one of the major threads in Matthew’s gospel; a fair reading points us in this direction. However, this can present problems for modern-day students. Often, the OT is not the focus of serious study as it should be. Spending time in unfamiliar OT passages is not something many want to do. Yet, how can we study Matthew’s gospel without turning back to the OT? Jesus helps us understand the Law of Moses; He remains the best interpreter of Torah/law. Luke records these words of Jesus: “*These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me*” (Luke 24:44). David A. Silva has counted over thirty prophecies and fulfillment in Matthew’s gospel (*An Introduction to the New Testament: Contexts, Methods and Ministry Formation*, 247). To put it another way: When readers of Matthew’s gospel looked at Jesus, they

were seeing someone the prophets of old had already seen through inspiration. Richard Hays has said: "Christian interpreters lulled by familiarity with Matthew's Gospel may not fully appreciate the immense scope of the Christological assertions made at every turn by Matthew." Further, *"My words will not pass away"* are true only if Jesus is "in fact the God of Israel, God with us" (*Reading Backwards: Figural Christology and the Fourfold Gospel Witness*, 47).

"So they said to him, 'In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet: But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, Are not the least among the rulers of Judah; For out of you shall come a Ruler Who will shepherd My people Israel'" (Matthew 2:5-6). In response to Herod's question about where the Christ was to be born, the Jewish leaders said *"thus it is written."* **Micah 5:2** identified Bethlehem Ephrathah as the place of Jesus' birth; the LXX has the *"house of Ephrathah."* Bethlehem Ephrathah was the birthplace of David's dynasty; David's father, Jesse, was an Ephrathite of Bethlehem Judah (**1 Samuel 17:12**). Micah's prophecy looks beyond the ruin and rebellion of God's chosen people, to His chosen King—the Christ—who would be born in Bethlehem Ephrathah. In Matthew's use of Micah's prophecy, Ephrathah becomes *"Bethlehem, in the land of Judah."* John tells us that some refused to listen to Jesus, believing that He came from Galilee; Jesus could not be the Messiah if He was from Galilee (**John 7:41-42**). Jesus was born in Bethlehem, not Jerusalem, or in any other Judean city.

If the Jewish leaders and experts in the OT knew where the Christ was to be born, why didn't they rush to welcome Him into the world? The wise men rejoiced when they found Jesus. Why didn't the Jewish leaders greet the baby Jesus along with Mary and Joseph? They knew what Micah said; yet, they did nothing. They lifted not a finger to help in any way; they moved not an inch to show any kind of consideration for the Christ, who was now in the world. What about you and me? We know what Micah and Matthew said. We know that the Savior was born. Do we rush to worship Him? Do we quickly identify with Him? Or, do we, as did the Jews in Matthew's gospel, cry out with a great frenzy, CRUCIFY HIM, CRUCIFY HIM? Yes, studying OT prophecy is needed. Remember, though, that knowledge is no substitute for obedience.

Randy Harshbarger

The Second Commandment

Following up on the first commandment to have no other gods before Jehovah the Lord tells the Israelites, *"Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, nor any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them, for I Jehovah thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, upon the*

third and upon the fourth generation of them that hate me, and showing lovingkindness unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments." (**Exodus 20:4-6**) All of the nations around them bowed down to statues of wood and stone covered with silver and gold. Jeremiah even mocked them in **Jeremiah 10:1-6**. So did **Isaiah 46:3-7**. Now no adult idolater really thought that their god was a piece of wood or a hunk of stone. These were just representations of what they thought their god looked like. No modern day person who uses statues in worship can do any better so both stand condemned by this commandment.

Jesus said in **John 4:24** that God is a Spirit. He told the disciples in **Luke 24:39** *"See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye behold me having."* An image requires a form which God repeatedly reminded the Israelites they did not see when He presented Himself to them at Horeb, **Deuteronomy 4:12,15**. Since God is a spirit and spirit has no form, ANY representation of Him would be in error. This is idolatry's big mistake: even "well-meaning" idolatry is denigrating to the true God!

Clee Reddinger, El Dorado church of Christ

Practical Rules for A Happy Married Life

1. Never both be angry at once.
2. Never talk AT one another, either alone or in company.
3. Never speak loudly to one another unless the house is on fire.
4. Let each one strive to yield more often to the wishes of the other.
5. Let self denial be the daily aim and practice of each.
6. Never taunt with a past mistake.
7. Neglect the whole world rather than one another.
8. Never make a remark at the expense of one another.
9. Never part for a day without words to think of kindly during absence.
10. Never meet without a loving welcome.
11. Never let the sun go down on any anger or grievance.
12. Never forget the happy hours of early love.
13. Never forget that marriage is ordained of God, and that His blessings alone can make it what it ought to be.

by Johnny Ramsey

Eph. 5:24 *But as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives also be to their husbands in everything. 25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it;*

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

Elders Ron Peck and Jim Stauffer

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OF ACTS - BYRON TAYLOR

WEDNESDAY BIBLE CLASS: THE
BOOK OF JAMES - JOE HURD

SUNDAY SERMON: THE VALUE OF
SONG WORSHIP



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