

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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LESSONS NEEDING TO BE LEARNED

Jim Stauffer

Jesus both lived and taught a way of life that would please God in heaven. He is both our example and our Master Teacher. One such occasion of His teaching was the parable of the lost son in **Luke 15:11-32**.

Learning from the mistakes of others is an opportunity we should not waste. Jesus affords us this opportunity on this occasion.

The losses he suffered by forsaking his relationship with his father, yet could not see at the time were great. The most obvious thing was the fellowship of his father. The intended parallel is when we sin we are separated from God (**Isa. 59:1,2**) and are without hope in this world without God our Father (**Eph. 2:12**). But this young man learned the price of his decision when he lost his freedom and was forced to feed hogs to survive. As a Jewish man this meant the loss of his self respect as well and finally he stooped to eating the same thing he fed the hogs. He did not look far enough ahead to see the price of his decision to leave his father's house. Some humility would have avoided this rash decision made with considerations of the flesh. ***We must learn to consider the impact of the things we say and do.***

Without this humility there would be no way to correct his mistake. Like David of old he had to realize the relationship he had fractured was with his father (**Psa. 51:4; vs. 18,19**). Humility, in his case, brought on by the cost of his sin, allowed him to come to *himself* (**vs 17**). Pride was what led him away from the father and losing it was necessary for him to return. When we sin God demands confession, an acknowledgment, to restore our relationship with Him (**1 Joh. 1:9**). ***It is imperative we recognize we left, not God, therefore a return requires action, movement on our end.***

In this parable we see illustrated the unending and unconditional love of the father. We see how dependent the child of God is upon His love and compassion. Our foolishness can and does lead us to make such decisions that without this love would leave us hopelessly separated from the One who has the

power to grant eternal life. As we have stated already, our restoration is not unconditional, but is conditional. We must return to the Father and repentance is the only way. Genuine contrition over sin is necessary for true repentance to take place (**vs 21; 2 Cor. 7:10**). ***The redeeming factor for us is this unending, unconditional love of God, our Father.***

The final lesson Jesus provides in this parable is the potential for arrogance among the "faithful" exhibited by the older brother. It is so easy for us to look down upon our brethren for the mistakes they make. It is easy to imagine many of the sinful acts committed by brethren are simply the fruit of the thoughts of the heart as Jesus said on another occasion (**Mat. 15:19**). Often times the same thoughts we may have had and not acted on. In such cases our arrogance leads us to the very sin the older brother committed in this story.

We must come to a recognition of our own relative unworthiness. Jesus puts faithful service in proper perspective a couple of chapters later. **Luke 17:10** *So you also, when you have done all that you were commanded, say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty.'*

The older brother, the "faithful" one failed to see himself as he really was. Someone envious of another. When Paul lists the works of the flesh he names envy as one. John speaks on the subject of love and describes God as love for us as proven by the sending of His only Son to save us from our sins (**1 Joh. 4:9**). He then tells us we cannot love God whom we have not seen if we cannot love our brother whom we have seen (**1 Joh. 4:20**).

Jesus teaches us to consider the impact of our actions. The cost of our sin, if you will. But even more, to recognize his love for us and have the humility to repent and return to Him. Furthermore, we are brethren in the Lord and must support with our love any and all who do repent and confess their sins before God and us.

Embrace the penitent heart just as God does.

THE KING OF THE JEWS

"Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, 'Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him'" (Matthew 2:1-2). In only a few words Matthew recounts Jesus' birth. No shepherds, no stable. Bethlehem, though, is mentioned, pointing us to the OT. Bethlehem was the place where Rachel, beloved wife of Jacob, died after giving birth to Benjamin; here she was buried. Bethlehem was the *"city of David"* (1 Samuel 20:6). Now, in this city, the great descendant of David is born. Seven hundred years earlier, Micah foretold of this event. *"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Though you are little among the thousands of Judah, Yet out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, From everlasting"* (Micah 5:2). And so the King was born. Yet, another king was in charge of Bethlehem and all areas nearby (Judea and Galilee).

Matthew specifies the time of Jesus' birth: *"in the days of Herod."* Herod the Great, b. 73BC, d.4/1BC, was appointed king of Judea by the Roman Senate in 40BC. In only a few years he had solidified his power, eliminating most opposition to his reign. His father, Antipater, was a Jew of Idumaeen/Edomite descent (Idumaeans and Edomites were prime players in the *Period Between the Testaments*). One of Herod's wives was the Hasmonean princess, Mariamne. Herod was an able king, bringing peace and prosperity to his domain. He is remembered for rebuilding the temple (John 2:20), evidently without interfering in the Judaic worship services. Still, he was unpopular with the Jews; they questioned his connection to Judaism via his marriages.

True of many powerful men, Herod was a jealous tyrant. He killed two of his sons, believing they were siding with the Jews. Eventually, he murdered Mariamne. Now, we can perhaps better understand his slaughter of the male infants in Bethlehem and surrounding areas (Matthew 2:16). He arranged to arrest many people who were then to be killed upon his death; that way, great mourning would go throughout the land (this plan was not carried out). Upon his death, his kingdom was divided between three sons (Matthew 2:22).

After seeing *"His star,"* wise men from the East came to worship this newly born king. What did they see? What were their names? How many were there? How much did they understand when they asked: *"Where is He who has been born King of the Jews?"* While the historian Josephus wrote about high Jewish expectations of a Messiah, it is unlikely that these visitors were Jews. The star appeared again, directing them to the place *"where the young child was."* They reacted with joy, rejoicing, and worship.

Reactions to Matthew's narrative vary. Some today are glad and rejoice that the Savior has come. Some today rejoice to be able to worship King Jesus. Others refuse to bow and humble themselves before the true King of all. Then as now many seek His destruction. *"And set up over his head his accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS" (Matthew 27:37).*

Randy Harshbarger

The War Against God by J.R. Bronger

Have you ever wondered why there is such an effort to remove God from public consciousness? I see billboards along the interstate saying things like "God is an imaginary friend," or "In the beginning man created God," and "There is no God, don't believe everything you hear."

Those most militant in this often equate believing in God with believing in the Tooth Fairy, the Easter Bunny and Santa Claus. If this is the case, then why haven't we seen billboards proclaiming "The tooth fairy is an imaginary friend"? There is no concerted effort to keep the Tooth Fairy out of schools? There is a reason you know!

Millions of people need money but there is no one who puts a tooth beneath his pillow expecting the Tooth Fairy to replace it with needed money. Yet, millions of people who believe in God pray diligently believing that God hears and answers prayers (1 John 3:22). Hospitals are filled with the sick and dying but nobody asks Santa to heal their loved ones. However, countless sick petition God to intervene and providentially provide healing. But suppose people actually put a tooth under the pillow expecting an answer from the Tooth Fairy. Or suppose people really wrote Santa asking for healing—would any try to make such unconstitutional? It is doubtful anyone would respond with little more than a "ho hum—how silly can people be?"

An article in the New York Times lamented just how out of touch America is with the rest of the industrialized world. The article pointed out that all the other industrialized countries were secular rather than religious, and America (in their view) remains religious. Do you really think the writer just wants us to get in step with the rest of the world?

The apostle John closed his first letter with this profound admonition: *"Little children, keep yourselves from idols"* (1 Jn 5:21). What these "anti-God" zealots are pushing is idolatry. They seek to replace God with the State. They wish to have all our "prayers" answered by the "gods" we have elected to federal and state offices.

This nation was established upon biblical principles—none can with honesty deny this. The Declaration of Independence asserts this link when it says: All men "are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable

Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.” Do you know why the Liberty Bell (located in Independence Hall in Philadelphia, PA) is called the liberty bell? Because it has engraved on it **Leviticus 25:10**, *“proclaim liberty throughout all the land.”*

For centuries Americans have acknowledged that our liberties come from God not man. God, not government gives us our freedoms. Because the Creator of the world is the source of our freedom, no state, no human being, no government may take it away. If the State were the source of liberty, then obviously the State could take it away. So, there is a push underway to remove God and replace Him with the State. Then the State (Idol) can dispense rights or withhold rights.

While there is a war being waged against God, there seems to be an acceptance of Islam. If there are efforts to remove the God of the Bible (Whom they call the Judeo-Christian God), why isn't there the same effort to remove Allah (the god of Islam)? It is because Allah is not regarded as the source of liberty, but as the object of submission (“Islam” means “submission”). On the other hand, *“where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty” (2 Cor 3:17)*.

In 1962 the war against God gained momentum. The Supreme Court ruled that it was unconstitutional for schools to allow a non-denominational prayer to be said. Something as humble as “Almighty God, we acknowledge our dependence upon Thee, and we beg Thy blessings upon us, our parents, our teachers and our Country.” The purpose of the ruling was to impose secularism upon this country. Skirmishes and battles have continued and frankly the secularists are winning. Now, a valedictorian cannot thank God for his/her success. Efforts are underway to remove “under God” from our Pledge of Allegiance. Professional sports teams are told to stop having the song “God Bless America” sung before games.

God is replaced by the government, the Lord by the President, the Bible by the edicts from the Supreme Court. Generations of Americans are more afraid of the government (political correctness—not speaking out against homosexuality, hate speech you know) than God. Christians also seem to fear government more than God (“I can't mention God, Christ or church at work, I might get fired”). Obedience to state has replaced submission to God. Where are the bold among us who stand up and say *“We ought to obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29)?*

Peter warned: *“While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage” (2 Pet 2:19)*. Without God in the heart and consciousness of this land, we will become slaves of corruption; unimaginable corruption.

Without God there is no good and evil. Who is to say that murdering the unborn, or the aged is evil? Flash mobs, knockout games and random acts of violence will

become more pronounced.

To God we are always important, but without God, there is no objective meaning to life. If you cease being important to society (old, infirm, disabled, etc.) then the state can give you “end of life” care (translated euthanasia).

Without God, the human being has no free will. That is, we become like robots programed by our genes or our environment. Homosexuality becomes a genetic predisposition rather than a choice. The murderer is not to be held accountable because he became that way because he was abused and unloved by his mother. Without God, there are no inalienable human rights. Nothing can be granted by “our Creator” if a Creator does not exist. Rights are then granted and removed by the capricious whim of the government under which we are forced to live. Think NAZI Germany! In their 25-point Party Program, published in 1920, NAZI party members publicly declared their intention to segregate Jews from Aryan society and to abrogate Jews' political, legal, and civil rights. They were stripped of all rights to own property, operate businesses and were expected to pay restitution to the aggrieved. The result? More than 6,000,000 murdered in the holocaust.

For sure, as David proclaimed before his encounter with the giant Goliath, *“the battle is the Lord's” (1 Sam 17:47)*. But we must, like David, seek out five smooth stones and go to the front lines. Stand in our place, take up the sword of the Spirit, and do not fear what man might do. We must have the commitment of another great warrior who said: *“But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord” (Josh 24:15)*.

Taken from preachertrainingclasses.com

GIVING AN ANSWER

Jim Stauffer

1 Pet. 3:15 *but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect,*

The Greek word *apologia*, which is rendered defense here, simply means to give a rational explanation for the hope we hold dear, that dictates our actions. It does not mean to defend ourselves against a local authority in order to be set free of charges, but rather to explain in an informative way why we hold to that belief in the face of the aforementioned persecution.

There are two demands of a child of God in this situation. First he must actually have a sufficient understanding of Scripture to explain rationally why he holds this hope. Secondly, he must have sanctified, or set apart Christ as Lord because of that understanding and therefore possess the courage to answer any who may question the reasons for his conduct.

This is the way the Lord planned for His disciples to shine light on a world guided by the lust of the flesh, lust of the eye and the pride of life.

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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NEWS AND NOTES:

SICK IN NEED OF PRAYERS:

GRANT CLOTHIER HAS SUFFERED A STROKE. PLEASE REMEMBER HIM IN PRAYER AND SEND HIM A CARD. REMEMBER J.R. DANIEL AND JAN PATRICK AS WELL.

SUNDAY BIBLE CLASS - THE BOOK OF ACTS - BYRON TAYLOR

WEDNESDAY BIBLE CLASS - THE BOOK OF JAMES - JOE HURD

SUNDAY SERMON:

AM - LOOKING BACK

PM - GIVING AS PROSPERED



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