

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"

APRIL 2, 2017

THE RIGHTS OF THE KING

Jim Stauffer

Jesus made a contrasting point about kingdoms in His conversation with Pilate, **John 18:36** *Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm." 37 Therefore Pilate said to Him, "So You are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice."*

He made further distinction between kingdoms when he was confronted by the Pharisees and Herodians about paying poll tax to Caesar. Jesus said,*render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's* (**Mat. 22:21**).

There should be no question as to what Jesus is teaching His disciples. There is a clear distinction between His kingdom and the kingdoms of men. Their kingdoms are of this world and serve a purpose in this world only. His kingdom is spiritual in nature and serves a purpose both here in this world and in the world to come.

We are not taking anything of value from the Kingdom of Christ by giving appropriate deference to the earthly kingdom under which we live.

We are failing in the spiritual kingdom when we fail to give to God what is His because of a failure to understand our role in each of these kingdoms.

Recognizing the difference between eternal and temporal is not complicated but it is easy to become confused. Kind of a "can't see the forest for the trees" kind of thing.

Both Christ and the apostle Paul tell us we have an eternal abode prepared for us by the Lord if we are faithful servants in His kingdom (**John. 14:1-3; 2 Cor. 5:1**).

We recognize our duties under our earthly rulers. We obey laws designed to bring order to society and pay the

appropriate taxes due to support the organizations necessary to maintain that designed order (**Romans 13:1-8**).

In the Kingdom of Christ we become a changed person from the love and cares of this world (**1John. 2:15-17; Eph. 4:20-24**). The process of conversion will then cause us to be led by the Spirit (**Gal. 5:16**), no longer attracted to the lusts of the flesh. What we do become is one who follows the pathway of our Lord in the life we live. We are now given to the *fruit of the Spirit*, which is, *love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control*; all of which serve the purposes of Christ's Kingdom. These, we see are the things that belong to God. Our very hearts are given to Him to mold in His likeness and enable us to provide the service His kingdom demands.

We are now the likeness of Christ in our lives before a world that has yet resisted this change (**Eph. 5:1,2; 1 Pet. 2:21-24**).

It is through this change we can show the proper love for God and our neighbor (**Mat. 22:37-39**). It is through this change that our priorities in life become altered and we now seek to care for our brethren both in any material needs they have as well as edifying them spiritually.

These things take priority in our lives. They become the important things we think about daily. We plan our day to accomplish these goals. We pray daily for His assistance in achieving that which enhances His kingdom in any way.

Why? It is as simple as recognizing value. In material matters we automatically decide matters based on the value. Which way is most advantageous to me materially?

Now, this rationale is translated in that we first recognize the greater value of things belonging to God and we then learn what he values from us as His servants and pursue it with all our heart and soul and mind.

Church Is Not an Event

We live in an event driven culture. Each week we are presented with a lavish buffet of music, art, and sporting events, with a side dish of parties, programs, and festivals. As a result, many people describe the quality of their life in terms of how many events they attend. “Yes, we had a great weekend,” they say, “We went to 5 different events.” We are a culture who staggers from one event to the next in search of our next fix of adrenaline.

Therefore, we have become a society of blurry eyed watchers. The Puritan work ethic is replaced with a purely watch ethic.

This is seen in the rise of social media. People are preoccupied with watching what happens in other people’s lives. So, they breathlessly wait for the next notification to “ding” their phone. Time magazine reports that Americans check their phones 8 billion times a day. Psychology Today compares our obsession with social media to drug addiction. The gentle rush of pleasure the user gets from each new notification floods the brain with hormones, and before long the user cannot physically or emotionally live without it.

Our “culture of watchers” is also seen in the rise of reality TV and media. Watching other people livestream their lives is a multi-billion-dollar industry. Over 50 million people subscribe to watch others play video games, make things, and yes, just eat dinner. It is easier to watch others live than do the messy business of living. There are some troubling trends in these cultural characteristics. They tend to focus on self. That is why we spend so much money on stadiums and theaters. The event should be fun. Because, if you didn’t have a good time, you don’t go back, because the event is about you.

In addition, our event watching culture is about comfort. Watching requires little participation. We can have “friends” on Facebook without the hard work of being a friend. We can go watch a sporting event without the pain of getting in shape.

Now to the point. Our culture of “event driven watchers” affects the way we understand the word “church.” Most people see “church” as an event you attend where you watch a performance that is intended to make you feel better.

So, churches are in a mad rush to make their worship events more exciting and convenient. Because, if the people are happy with your product they will come back to your future events.

Then Jesus steps onto the scene and says, “*If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily and follow Me*” (Luke 9:23). Jesus defines His church very differently than our culture. It is not about self, but about Him. It is not about our comfort, but our cross. What the New Testament teaches about the church is uncomfortably counter-

cultural.

Here is where it begins. The church is not an event, it is primarily a relationship. This is a concept the church in Corinth needed to learn, because they had many of the same misunderstandings of the church we do. Their “events” overshadowed the relationships that bind the church together.

Chiefly, the church is a relationship with God. Paul addressed **1 Corinthians** to “*the church of God*,” those who “*were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord*.” (**1 Cor. 1:2,9**). The church is people who belong to God, and therefore have a genuine fellowship with Jesus as their Lord. That radically redefines church.

To be His church, you must belong to God. This relationship begins when we are “*called to be saints*” (**1 Cor. 1:2; 2 Thess. 2:13-15**), and we respond in faith-driven repentance and baptism. Our sins are removed so we can have fellowship with a holy God. This relationship deepens when we are “*sanctified in Christ Jesus*” (**1 Cor. 1:2**). Set apart from sin and dedicated to the purposes of God. God’s church is a saved and dedicated bunch.

This deeply affects our understanding of “church.” We are only the church if we intimately know the Lord. He saved us and changed us, and we have dedicated lives to serving His purpose. That means “church” is much more than something we do on Sundays at a certain place. In fact, most of what we do as a part of God’s church is done in our individual lives, because we belong to God.

Secondarily, the church is a relationship with other believers. When people attend events, they are not usually interested in developing deep relationships with their fellow attenders. They are there for themselves. Not so, the church. God’s church is a people who have a living relationship with fellow believers (**1 Cor. 1:2**).

In Corinth, some simply ignored those they worshiped with. They came in, took the Lord’s Supper and left, but were unconcerned about others (**1 Cor. 11:17-ff**). Paul tells them they should be as interconnected as a body, where each member serves a vital function for every other member (**1 Cor. 12:27**).

Other relationships in Corinth were splintered because of selfish arrogance (**1 Cor. 3:3; 6:1-ff**). So, Paul reminds them they are the “*temple of God*” and the Spirit of God sees how they treat one another (**1 Cor. 3:16-17**).

In our culture of watchers, it is not surprising that people do not develop active, meaningful relationships with other believers. But, remember, watching ultimately makes you flabby and useless! God did not save us to set us on the shelf. He gifted us to serve others. God’s church is not made up of watchers, they are workers (**1 Cor 14:12; Heb. 10:24-25**).

The Church Is the Gospel in Action!

Ultimately, the church is an illustration of the gospel.

The gospel is the account of how a holy God desired to have a relationship with sinful, fragile people like us. So, God chose to participate in our humanity to have fellowship with us.

Now, He asks us to set aside our comforts and participate in the lives of others, even those who don't deserve it, so we can have a relationship with each other and with God.

Don't let culture define "church." Let the gospel do it!

"Let all that you do be done in love." (1 Cor. 16:14)

Extra Bits:

Isn't it strange...

If we wear ourselves out at work, on vacation, playing a sport, or doing our hobby we count it acceptable, even enjoyable!

But, if we wear ourselves out on a day of worship and voluntary service to others we count it undesirable, even something to avoid?

A good quote from Paul Earnhart. It is a reminder that we must not limit our service to God to the confines of a church building.

"Most of what we do in service to the Lord will be worked out as individual disciples in the pursuits of daily life where we meet our obligations to our families (**Ephesians 5:22–6:4**), to our employers (**6:6–9**), to the officials of government (**1 Peter 2:13–17**), to our enemies (**Matthew 5:43–48; Romans 12:17–21**), to the poor (**Ephesians 4:28; James 1:27**) and especially to lost men and women (**Matthew 28:19–20; Acts 8:4**). All this will be liberally sprinkled with private prayer (**Philippians 4:6–7**) and Bible study (**Colossians 3:16**), and even a spiritual song now and then (**James 5:13**)."

Earnhart, P. (1997). *What Is a Local Church?* (E. Harrell, Ed.) *Christianity Magazine*, 14(3/4), 13.

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WHEN YOU PRAY

"And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words. Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him. In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen. For if you forgive

men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matthew 6:5-15).

In our efforts to serve the Lord and in serving other people, we should never try to call attention to ourselves; let our actions speak for themselves; let us refrain from "tooting" our own pious horns. The same principles apply to our prayers. Visible prayers, long prayers, flowery mantras, pretense, verbosity—these and other abuses of prayer, should be avoided by kingdom citizens. After all, it is not our kingdom! The world often has a negative view of Christians anyway; let us not contribute to those feelings (even when often misguided) by trying to force the Lord into listening to us by becoming religious showmen. Don't stand in the streets; go into your room and shut the door. Even there, the windows of heaven are open. Public prayer is not the point. Whose approval do we seek?

What are vain repetitions? This is tricky. Some prayers, though laced with oft heard expressions ("ready recollection" "forgive us of our many, many sins" "we are thankful for the chance of heaven") are as sincere and heartfelt as any other prayer may be (only the Lord knows). Nervousness in a public assembly can add to forgetfulness, anxiety, and fumbling from sincere, dedicated Christians. On the other hand, is it safe to say that we can and should work at the art of praying better? We would have better praying (an important aspect of our worship assembly) if we took time to think about what we will say when we pray. Well thought out prayers (ahead of time) will include essential components that are suitable to the occasion. Our private prayers are just that—private. Our public prayers are expressions of worship; the one praying is leading others in this aspect of worship. Paying attention to God, His Son, our salvation, our need for our Savior, our blessings—these realities should be on our hearts and lips whether praying publicly or privately. In our prayers, let us remember that we do not need to inform God of what His word says; after all, He wrote the Bible!

Jesus expected His followers to pray. But He also said: I need to talk to you about this important business of praying. Kingdom citizens will always listen to the Lord.

Randy Harshbarger

A rather pompous-looking deacon was endeavoring to impress upon a class of boys the importance of living the Christian life. "Why do people call me a Christian?" the man asked. After a moment's pause, one youngster said, "Maybe it's because they don't know you."

Source Unknown.

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:
JAN PATRICK, STEPHEN KIMKER,
SARA DENT AND J.T. PECK.

SUNDAY IS THE FINAL DAY FOR
OUR 3 DAY MEETING,
FOLLOWING THE MESSIAH. WE
ARE EXPERIENCING THE
POTENTIAL USES OF MODERN
TECHNOLOGY IN BIBLE STUDY.
PLEASE COME TO HEAR THE FINAL
THREE LESSONS, **DIVING INTO
JESUS' LIFE; THE GEOGRAPHY
OF ISRAEL AND JESUS'
DISCIPLES.**



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