

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 9, 2017

THE GRASS IS GREENER RIGHT HERE

Jim Stauffer

The way we achieve a healthy lawn is to plant perennial grass along with annual grass. The annual grass serves to sustain and strengthen the perennial until it thickens sufficiently to sustain itself. Once this is achieved the annual grass is no longer needed.

You may ask how this is reminiscent of growth in the Lord's Kingdom. One of the most disappointing aspects of church growth is that far too many members are annuals instead of perennials. When that is the case, the turnover is similar to what our lawns would look like if we planted mostly annual grass instead of perennial.

The writer of Proverbs said, **Prov. 22:6** *Train up a child in the way he should go, Even when he is old he will not depart from it.* When we fail to care for those in our own number and ensure their growth and safety, we fail to support the perennials and allow them to become annuals and soon they disappear from our number.

It is very similar to the man who cannot seem to fill the water bucket because it has a hole and continues to leak as he pours more into it.

Our first step is to preach the gospel in its purity. Only the truth will produce real disciples of Christ, perennials, if you will (**John 8:32**). We cannot make disciples of the Christ Who lived a life devoted to our instruction and redemption and died an ignominious death on the cross to be an atoning sacrifice for our sins, by entertaining them with things that please the flesh.

There may always be a temptation to practice the social gospel by making our worship please those from the world who enter. The fact is we can only sustain growth when we teach men to reverently worship and please the God Who has redeemed us.

My plea to all is to become what the apostle Peter assumed the disciple to be when he stated we must, *....sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence;* **1Pet. 3:15**. Take a close look

at this text and you will see Peter is emphasizing our need to sanctify Christ as Lord as he assumes we already know enough to offer a defense. He says we need to stand strong enough to make that defense.

There is only one way we will bring our children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord and edify our fellow saints to the point of enduring persecution and remaining faithful to the end (**Eph. 6:1-4; 4:12; Heb. 3:14**). That way is to strengthen ourselves by feeding on the word of God daily. By becoming what our past reputation was, walking bibles among the world, always ready to both explain and defend the message of God to mankind in the sincere desire to save the souls of the lost for whom Jesus died (**Luke 19:10**).

The beauty of this remedy is we hold the key in our very hands. We have the ability to put our hand to the plow as Jesus taught (**Luke 9:61,62**). It is I who can make the necessary changes in my life to see that I know what my Lord has commanded of me by reading and studying His word.

When we decide the kingdom of heaven is truly a treasure hidden in a field and that precious pearl of great price, we will commit ourselves to giving everything it takes to achieve the goal of entering and remaining in it.

Once we become committed to the work of the Lord, we will begin to communicate the gospel to the world (**Mark 16:15,16**). We will make a diligent effort to be approved as a workman of God (**2 Tim. 2:15**). We will be content with reverent worship according to biblical instruction. We will *sing with the spirit and with the understanding; pray without ceasing; proclaim the Lord's death until he comes; lay by him in store as God has prospered him; building up the body of Christ* (**1 Cor. 14:15; 1 Th. 5:17; 1 Cor. 11:26; 16:2; Eph. 4:12**) and be content to follow His instruction rather than attempt to please ourselves.

Matt. 25:23 *His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful with a few thingsenter thou into the joy of thy lord.*

PRAYER

Jesus said: *“In this manner, therefore, pray.”* We call His words the *Lord’s Prayer*; in reality, Jesus did not pray this prayer. Why would He need to pray for forgiveness? Jesus was teaching His followers about the essential elements and attitudes of prayer and of kingdom living. Kingdom citizens express in prayer the needed, vital elements of their lives. He says: This is *how* you should pray; He didn’t say: This is *what* you are to pray.

In prayer, we address God as our Father. Our Father knows us, loves us, cares about us; He is our Creator; He is the master of the universe. Kingdom citizens have the privilege of calling upon God as Father—Abba, Abba—a term of intimacy used by Jesus and now by His followers. Notice the petitions in this prayer. First, *Hallowed be Your name*. Rather than beginning with a laundry list of needs and wants, our prayers should begin with recognition of who God is. He comes first. Let our heavenly Father always occupy first place in the world and in our hearts. Father, make us holy as You are holy. Second, *Your kingdom come*. The kingdom of God equates to the rule of God in the hearts of His people. Let the kingdom come into the hearts of men and women everywhere; let all bow the knee in accepting the rule of God. Let God rule in all lives; let His gospel spread.

Do we pray this same prayer today? No, some say, because the kingdom is the church and the church is the kingdom and the church has been established so why pray for the kingdom/church to come? It is true that Jesus spoke of the kingdom and the church in the same context (**Matthew 16:16ff**). It is not true, though, that God has always had a Messianic kingdom/church. Who would deny though, that throughout history, whenever someone let God rule in their hearts, that the kingdom existed; that is what kingdom means—the rule of God in the lives and hearts of people? The prophets spoke of the Messianic kingdom (**Daniel 2, Joel 2, Isaiah 2**). The Lord added people to His church when they obeyed His will (**Acts 2**). The church, the *ecclesia*, the called-out body, is people who have accepted the rule and reign of God in their lives. If you are in the church, are you in the kingdom? Yes. If you are in the kingdom, are you in the church, the saved body of God’s people? Yes (properly defined and understood). While such discourses grow out of false teaching about the church/kingdom (and we need to properly understand these Bible teachings), we might also be careful about our righteousness exceeding that of the Lord’s.

“Your will be done.” Ultimately, every knee will bow in submission to heaven’s will (**Philippians 2:5-11**). Every wrong will be made right; every injustice will be dealt with accordingly. Still, as kingdom citizens, we have the opportunity to order our lives in ways that accord with Jesus’ teaching. Our Lord says: The world may say this, but I say unto you. My followers are called

to a higher standard. The lives of My followers reflect heaven’s values. Honesty, integrity, love, and self-restraint reflect heaven’s will for these lights in a dark world. When this world comes to an end, we will not need these guidelines from the Lord. Until then, let us pray that the Lord’s will, will be done in our lives and that many will come to Jesus.

Randy Harshbarger

Not Forgotten

It was one of those unbearable situations where a child was dying of cancer and there was no longer any hope. The seven year old is talking with his parents and asks the impossible question, “After I am gone will you remember me?” He asked because the saddest situation to be in is to be forgotten. No one wants to be forgotten. We go through the cemeteries and see countless monuments erected to loved ones now gone crafted from granite because we do not want to forget or be forgotten.

Eventually, however there is no one around to whom the names and dates on the stones mean anything and then there is no memory of significance. Except for one place. That place is in the heart of God. The Hebrew writer said in **Hebrews 13:5**, *“Be ye free from the love of money; content with such things as ye have: for himself hath said, I will in no wise fail thee, neither will I in any wise forsake thee.”* The whole premise of the promise is that God cannot forget. Every good deed will be rewarded and every evil deed shall be judged. Paul told the Romans in **Romans 2:6** that God *“will render to every man according to his works”*. That is only fair or right if God has a perfect memory of what has been done. But God remembers everything perfectly.

Everyone on this earth may forget us, and sooner or later they probably will (Quick: Name five people who lived five hundred years ago.) But we can rest assured that our God will never forget. As a result he constantly urges us not to forget Him either. This is the reason for the Lord’s Supper on the First Day of the week. We Forget. He Does Not.

Cleveland Reddinger

Which Church Should I Choose?

Several factors may be involved when making this decision. We may make our choice based upon the tradition of our family. “This is what my Father and Mother believed so this is what I believe...” or “This is the church where grandmother attended so this is the one that I will attend.” When this is the case we are basing our faith or lack thereof on nothing more than pure happenstance. If our parents believed something different or if Grandmother attended the church across town then we would choose one of those. Our soul is far too precious to commit to something with a base no stronger than an incidental.

Others may make their choice based upon popularity; which church in the area is everyone flocking to? This may be a church that provides little to no use of the scriptures but rather focuses on funny stories and feel good talks that make little to no application in one's life. The focus most times will be on making an appeal to the flesh. When this is the case it may be that we are looking to be part of a club rather than a church.

Which church should I choose? Jesus speaks of building His church in **Matthew 16:18**. Luke writes that He purchased this church with His blood in **Acts 20:28**. Paul writes that Jesus is the head of the church and that the church represents His body in **Ephesians 1:22-23**. He goes on to say of this body which is the church, that there is one in **Ephesians 4:4**.

As we read throughout the book of Acts and the epistles, at no time do we find a denominational name attached to the church. Most times it's simply called the church. In **Acts 20:28**, Luke refers to the church as *the church of GOD*; and indeed it is, but he's not referring to a denomination but rather to the one church that Jesus promised to build, purchased with His blood and is the head of. In **Romans 16** as Paul brings the Roman letter to a close he writes in **V16** *Greet one another with a holy kiss. The churches of Christ greet you*. Paul certainly was not referring to several different denominations but once again to the one church that Jesus promised to build. Some who were part of that church met in **Ephesus**, some met in **Philippi**, some in **Rome**, some in **Jerusalem**, some in **Antioch**, others in the province of **Galatia etc**. These were all churches that belonged to Christ; meaning that they were groups of Christians who were meeting in their local area (**Ephesus, Philippi, Rome etc.**) who were members of the one church that Jesus shed His blood for. These churches were operating under the oversight of Elders, Shepherds, Bishops or Pastors (all terms that are interchangeable describing the same office.) **Acts 14:21-23, 1 Peter 5:1-2**. There was no earthly headquarters, only Heaven, where the head Jesus Christ quarters.

The church was not something that one joined was voted into or entered by way of a miraculous sign, but rather one was added by the LORD upon his or her decision to obey the Gospel. On the day of Pentecost in **Acts 2** after Peter's convicting sermon where some in the crowd asked what they must do, Peter tells them to repent and be baptized for the remission of their sins and they would receive the gift of the Holy Ghost; **V41** *Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls*. In **V47** scripture says that *the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved*. Paul writes in **Ephesians 1:3** that *"all spiritual blessings are in Christ..."* In **Rom. 8:1**, he writes, *"there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit*.

Peter says in **Acts 4:12** *"...there is no salvation in any other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved."*

Which church should I chose?

According to scripture there's only one that is spoken of as belonging to Christ. It's the one He promised to build, shed His blood for and is the head of. He will add us to His church if we will gladly receive His word and obey it. Which church should I chose? If I want to be saved then I must chose HIS church.

Jay Dixon, University church of Christ, Richmond, Ky

A Hairy Reminder

A person between the ages of 20—30 has about 615 hair follicles per square centimeter. A person 50 years of age has around 485 hair follicles per square centimeter. Typically, most people have somewhere between 100,000—150,000 hairs on their head. By the way, the average hair loss for an individual is 50—100 hairs per day. As a result, there is no way you can tell accurately how many hairs you have (in fact, unless you are going bald, most of us don't really care). But God knows. Jesus said: *"Are not two sparrows sold for a cent? And yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Therefore do not fear; you are of more value than many sparrows"* (**Matt. 10:29-31**). This passage reveals three interesting truths.

First, God knows more about us than we know about us. That is a humbling thought. When we sometimes feel like no one understands us or grasps our situation, we forget that God does. God knows your personality. God knows your strengths. God knows what motivates you. God knows when you stumble. God knows the real you. Therefore, when God declares something worthwhile, He knows what He is talking about. When God warns about danger, He knows what He is talking about. When God tells us that we should do something, we need to do it, because He knows us better than we know ourselves.

God is a God of detail. How insignificant are hairs and sparrows to us. Yet God is aware of them. He is a God of details. The motives, attitudes, and heart behind our actions are as important to Him as the actions themselves. It does little good to give, if you have left out the detail of being cheerful. Singing fails if we neglect thankfulness in our heart. Let us be a people of details, as God is.

God cares about you. This is why Jesus referred to sparrows and hair. Christ was not sent to save the whales, the environment, or the endangered species, but mankind. Stress and worry often make us wonder if God cares. These two simple illustrations remind us that He does.

by Roger Shouse

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

OUR ADDRESS IS:

7845 Cottonwood Dr.

Lenexa, Kansas 66216

913-764-9170

Check out the following websites:

facebook.com/LenexaChurchofChrist

lenexachurchofchrist.org

NEWS AND NOTES:

SICK IN NEED OF PRAYERS:

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

SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE CLASS:

RELIGIOUS CONFUSION - JIM
STAUFFER

WEDNESDAY BIBLE CLASS -

ECCLESIASTES - BYRON TAYLOR

SUNDAY MORNING SERMON:

COVENANTS CARRY PROMISES



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