

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 11, 2017

## UNDERSTANDING SPIRITUAL VALUES

by Jim Stauffer

*Phil. 3:7 But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. 8 More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, 9 and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, 10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; 11 in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.*

This week we focus our attention on the seriousness and the reality of our commitment to the Lord as His disciples.

We have more words written in the New Testament by the apostle Paul and therefore are provided more details about him than any of the other apostles or disciples of Christ.

We know him first as Saul of Tarsus, a young man with a bright future as a Rabbi in the religion of the Jews. He had studied at the feet of Gamaliel (**Acts 22:3**), a disciple of Hillel, revered by the Jews as one of the great Rabbis in their memory.

As a loyal devotee of Judaism, he took great exception to the claims of the disciples of Jesus of Nazareth, that He was the prophesied Messiah. He persecuted those disciples aggressively (**Acts 7:58-8:3; 9:1,2**).

In the midst of one of his missions of persecution, the Lord appeared unto him on the road to Damascus and referred him to a man named Ananias in the city who would teach him what he must do. After that teaching, Paul, who now believed in Jesus as the Christ, was told to, *Get up and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on His name.* (**Acts 22:16**) (see all three accounts of this event - **Acts 9; 22; 26**).

From this time forward we see Saul of Tarsus, now called Paul, fulfilling the statement made in our opening passage. He sacrificed his personal future because it no longer comported with his conviction. While it would have been more pleasant and profitable, he sacrificed it to serve the Lord Who saved him from his sins. Paul is one example in Scripture of a servant who truly understood the value of the spiritual kingdom of God. His faith in Christ and the subsequent righteousness led him to understand the power of the resurrection of Christ from the grave. He recognized the value of having fellowship with Christ in His sufferings by being conformed to His death. This, he says, will help him attain to the resurrection of the dead, detailed in his writings in **1 Cor. 15**.

Brethren, if being raised from the dead and reunited with Christ in heaven is our goal, we must properly value the spiritual kingdom of God.

Some further statements of Paul in this regard. He refers to the gospel as a treasure we have in our earthly bodies and as a result we will suffer persecution. He describes that persecution as, *always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.* (**2 Cor. 4:7-10**) He follows this shortly with a comparison between the suffering for the cause of Christ with the glories to be received when we are resurrected to be in heaven with Christ, our Savior (**2 Cor. 4:16-18**).

Paul's description of the sacrificial life of a disciple of Christ is that while we may well suffer here on earth at the hands of those who openly reject Jesus as the Savior of mankind, our reward in heaven will far exceed this temporary displeasure.

Remember the words of Jesus to Pilate prior to His crucifixion. He told Pilate He was a King and His Kingdom was not of this world and it was to be inhabited by those who receive the truth (**John 18:37**).

Commitment to the truth is necessary, not easy. The world is temporary, the Kingdom of Heaven is eternal.

## WISE BUILDERS AND FOOLISH BUILDERS

*"Therefore whoever hears these sayings of mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. But everyone who hears these sayings of mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall" (Matthew 7:24-27).*

There has never been a better conclusion to a sermon than Jesus' words about wise and foolish builders. It is application time. If we really *hear* the words of Jesus, we will put them into practice. Doing so or not doing so demonstrates our wisdom or our foolishness. Is this concluding refrain a parable? Possibly. It is certainly an ordinary life circumstance; a homespun illustration that nearly everyone would understand. Building houses and storms and soundness and disaster are meant to draw the listener to the real issue—choice! We have a choice, as we have had all through the mountain sermon. Will we be wise or foolish?

The choices presented by Jesus run counter to our modern thinking. Jesus says that it does make a difference what we believe. It makes a difference what we do; even sincerity, as good as it is, is not a guarantee of true kingdom living. Jesus says that there are not many ways to our heavenly Father. Religious pluralism was alive and well in the 1<sup>st</sup> c. and was soundly condemned. There are not many ways; there are only two ways. We can build our lives on Jesus and His teaching. We can find and hold to that solid rock foundation; or, we can build on the sand of countless other beliefs, religions, philosophies, and desires, all of which bring ruin.

The choice of Jesus that leads to an impregnable life is exclusive. Surely His detractors thought, "How narrow!" Are there only two choices? "How arrogant!" Dietrich Bonhoeffer posited that Jesus came to destroy religion, religion being human efforts to find acceptance to God. Our own efforts, as we ignore what Jesus said, will not keep out the wind and rain. God first reached down; can we see our need to reach up? God came down to rescue us. Our concerns about beatitudes and loving our enemies and displays of piety and trusting in God are designed to drive us to Jesus in wholehearted service.

Can we live up to the standard set forth in Jesus' sermon? Are His demands, ethics, and constraints even possible? To say no puts them beyond our reach. To say yes is better; but, still, let us remember our need for His strength. Matters of the heart are vital and they are tricky. A lifetime spent in pursuit of true kingdom righteousness can be an arduous journey; but remember

Jesus said: *"Be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect."* The standard is high. To accept the challenge means that we will depend on our Savior. In the end, that is the only true way to build a house, both for now and for later.

**Randy Harshbarger**

## Old Testament Answers: Where Am I Going?

As we have looked at the Old Testament, more specifically the writings of Moses, we have learned where we came from. We came from God, **Genesis 1:26f**. This is a personally and scientifically satisfying answer since it is in perfect harmony with everything we know about science and the Universe. We know what our purpose is: *"Fear God and keep His commandments for this is the whole duty of man."* (**Ecclesiastes 12:13**) Perfect illustrations of the centrality of obedience are found in both **Genesis 3 and 19**.

But where am I going? Well, if I came FROM God and am here to OBEY God, then it stands to reason to surmise that my future involves God, and you would be right! In **Ecclesiastes 12:7** the writer is concluding his encouragement to remember God before death when *"the dust returneth to the earth as it was, and the spirit returneth unto God who gave it."* My physical body is composed of recycled elements of this world but my spirit, that unseen part of me that is uniquely me and no one else, that part of my existence which is eternal in nature is going to return to the Father of Spirits, **Hebrews 12:9**.

Jesus rebuked the Sadducees in **Matthew 22:23-32** because they did not see the spiritual destiny of man plainly taught in the scriptures even though it is not set out in explicit word for word style. This is the same mistake modern liberals make when they look for the modern word "homosexual" in a 2,000 year old document. They did not talk that way but the concept is clearly there, as the eternal nature of man is here. Take a good honest look at **Ezekiel 18**. That chapter demands a return to God for Judgment!

**Cleveland Reddinger**

## Pierce My Ear Heath Robertson

In the last half of the book of Exodus, after the Israelites escaped from the clutches of the Egyptians, we read about God enacting some of the first laws of His covenant with Israel. As we look deeper into these laws we can clearly see that the Law of Moses foreshadowed the principles behind the Law of Christ (**Galatians 3; Hebrews 10**). In **Exodus 21:1-6**, we find one of God's laws concerning the relationship between slaves and their masters.

*"Now these are the rules that you shall set before*

*them. When you buy a Hebrew slave, he shall serve six, and in the seventh he shall go out free, for nothing. If he comes in single, he shall go out single; if he comes in married, then his wife shall go out with him. If his master gives him a wife and she bears him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out alone. But if the slave plainly says, 'I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free,' then his master shall bring him to God, and he shall bring him to the door or the doorpost. And his master shall bore his ear through with an awl, and he shall be his slave forever."*

Why would a slave pass up freedom and commit to staying with his master forever?! God knew "love" could cause one to do that. Now, this is not the concept of love that we are familiar with; most people only know a watered down perverted version of love. The popular idea of love would assume that the master must be paying the slave a six figure income or providing him with a house as big as his own. This is the concept of love that drove Demas out of the service to God (**2 Timothy 4:10**). Working with Paul for his Savior just wasn't giving him the success and wealth he had hoped. Demas "loved" the world because it paid out just the way he wanted. Many people serve the world for this reason. Unfortunately, the Devil has them greatly deceived because they are receiving a reward that is not spiritually fulfilling and will soon vanish away (**1 John 2:15-17**).

No, here we find love in the true sense. This love developed out of six years of respectful, kind commanding from the master and zealous, committed obedience from the slave. Though the master knows the slave is his possession, he is very loving, merciful, understanding and considerate of the slave's needs. When the slave recognizes all this about the master, he sees no better choice than committing to serve his master forever. The slave's greatest desire becomes diligently completing all the things his master requires of him. When his ear is pierced, it means something: "I love my master... I will not go out free."

If you are a Christian, what did it mean to you when you were baptized? If you're thinking about becoming a Christian, truly contemplate what you will be committing to when you confess your faith and are baptized. Are you more concerned with what you can get out of your relationship with God or are you committed to your Master in gratitude for the forgiveness and hope He has provided through His Son (**John 3:16**)? Are you even thankful for what He has done for you (**Luke 17:11-19**)? Do you consider what your Master provides for you today and everyday (**Luke 12:22-31**)? Who listens and cares for you more than He (**1 Peter 5:6-7; Psalm 34**)? Is being a Christian something that will only remain important as long as it fits into your schedule and plan in life (**James 4:13-15**)? How do you respond to the things He asks you to do (**Luke 6:46**)?

"Pierce my ear O Lord, My God. Take me to Your door this day, for I will serve no other God. Lord,

I'm here to stay. For You have paid the price for me and with Your blood You ransomed me. A free man, I'll never be."

While pondering on this passage, Steve Croft penned these opening words to his hymn, *Pierce My Ear*. Each day when we wake, may we consider the love of the Master and recommit ourselves to being "*slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart*"

(**Ephesians 6:6**). Because of our Master's great love, we can joyfully cry, "A free man I'll never be!"

**~via Edwards Lake Bulletin; Birmingham, Alabama; Taken from Market Street Messenger**

## **"Be Diligent In The Word Of Truth"**

In regards to character, morality, doctrine, worship etc.... there are certain things that GOD expects HIS people to live by and observe. That being the case it's essential that we are consistently growing in our biblical knowledge. But simply affirming that I want that knowledge doesn't mean that I am going to receive it; desire for knowledge + laziness = ignorance. However when we couple our desire for knowledge with diligence we will see an increase.

Paul instructs Timothy in **2nd Timothy 2:15** "*give diligence to present thyself approved unto God, a workman that needs not to be ashamed, handling aright the word of truth.*" One of the greatest examples of diligence in regards the word of truth were the noble minded Bereans. Concerning those in Berea, Luke writes in **Acts 17:11** "*Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.*" The Bereans are said to have been a group who *received the word with all eagerness*. How excited are we about the Word of GOD? Do we eagerly anticipate Bible study? Are we zealous in regards to putting into practice the things that we learn from the Word of GOD? These people received the word with eagerness; they wanted it. The Bereans are also said to have been a people who *daily examined the scriptures*. If we have any hope of gaining Biblical knowledge we must spend meaningful time in the Word of GOD every day.

A good friend of mine who coaches baseball was telling me of a kid that played for him several years ago who really struggled with his hitting. The coach suggested that he practice using a certain method. This kid listened to his coach and practiced this routine repeatedly. One day he noticed that the kid had practiced swinging the bat so much using this particular method that his hands were blistered and the skin was wearing off of the palms of his hands. Daily this kid diligently worked and put in the time and effort to improve his hitting and it worked. It takes nothing less than an effort such as this in regards to gaining Biblical knowledge. There must be a strong work ethic in regards to studying the Word of GOD and it must be put into practice daily in our lives.

**Jay Dixon, universitychurch.org**



**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,  
STEVE WIMP, J.T. PECK AND  
WENDY TAYLOR

SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE CLASS:  
FOLLOWING THE MESSIAH - RON  
PECK

WEDNESDAY BIBLE CLASS -  
FORGIVENESS - JIM STAUFFER

SUNDAY MORNING SERMON:  
INDEPENDENCE FROM GOD? WHY?



## **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