

Rom. 14:19
So then let
us follow
after things
which make
for peace,
and things
whereby
we may
edify one
another.

John 8:32 And
ye shall know
the truth and
the truth shall
make you free.

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OUR SALVATION AND SERVICE ARE SPIRITUAL IN NATURE

by Jim Stauffer

Psa. 69:7 *Because for Your sake I have borne reproach; Dishonor has covered my face. 8 I have become estranged from my brothers And an alien to my mother's sons. 9 For zeal for Your house has consumed me, And the reproaches of those who reproach You have fallen on me.*

Now we understand more fully that Jesus meant not only to correct the evil activity of the moneychangers in the temple, but also to emphasize the great divide between Him and the people of God who should have recognized Him as the Messiah of the Old Testament prophets. He promised us such separation of relatives and loved ones would occur to his disciples. *"Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. "For I came to SET A MAN AGAINST HIS FATHER, AND A DAUGHTER AGAINST HER MOTHER, AND A DAUGHTER-IN-LAW AGAINST HER MOTHER-IN-LAW; 36 and A MAN'S ENEMIES WILL BE THE MEMBERS OF HIS HOUSEHOLD. (Mat. 10:34-36)* He further reminds us *a disciple is not above his teacher, nor a slave above his master. (Mat. 10:24)* We know then, we shall suffer such separation from those who do not love the Lord.

How then are we to understand the promised joys of fellowship with Christ? Paul tells us in **1 Cor. 1:4-9** the reason for such joy is, *...in everything you were enriched in Him..., as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will also confirm you to the end, blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.*

The Scriptures demand we understand the difference in the material demonstrations of God's leadership in the Old Testament and the spiritual promises of the New Testament. These parallel passages illustrate just that. **Psa. 68:17** *The chariots of*

God are myriads, thousands upon thousands; The Lord is among them as at Sinai, in holiness. 18 You have ascended on high, You have led captive Your captives; You have received gifts among men, Even among the rebellious also, that the LORD God may dwell there.

Notice how Paul, in **Eph. 4**, references these verses just following a text where he teaches us there is a singularity of God's message and messenger. He encourages us to walk worthily of our calling by remembering there is, one body, Spirit, hope, Lord, faith, baptism, God and Father of all. *Therefore it says, "WHEN HE ASCENDED ON HIGH, HE LED CAPTIVE A HOST OF CAPTIVES, AND HE GAVE GIFTS TO MEN." (Eph. 4:8)*

What captives has Christ led captive for us? The Hebrew writer explains to us how it was necessary for Jesus to become a sharer *in flesh and blood* so that through His death, *He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is the devil. (Heb. 2:14,15)* Then Paul reminds us, **Rom. 8:2** *For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.* So Jesus, through His death, burial and resurrection has given us the ability to win in the struggle against *the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. (Eph. 6:12)*

Armed with the information that the message of the gospel of Christ is a spiritual message, we begin to see the full meaning of Jesus' reference to the prophet Hosea, *"But go and learn what this means: 'I DESIRE COMPASSION, AND NOT SACRIFICE,' for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners." (Matt. 9:13 cf. Hos. 6:6)* It is a message that teaches each and every person how to be redeemed from the bondage of sin and gain a hope of eternal life hereafter through our faith and trust in Christ the Messenger (**Rom. 5:1-5**). It is a message that clearly teaches us the way to become a disciple of Christ is through a genuine change of heart. Once we have both understood this spiritual message, we will have no hesitation to follow

Him obediently doing His commands.

What we will be obsessed with is His message. Our salvation. The lost souls around us who have yet to understand this message. What we will not be obsessed with is whether our nation shall always succeed as a nation or any other earthly concerns, because we realize if that is our primary concern our soul will suffer because we have been distracted from the greater theme, the salvation of our soul.

We can truly learn this by reading of the temptations of Jesus by Satan. **(see Mat. 4)**. In each of the temptations Satan attempted to draw Jesus' attention to temporal matters. Jesus persistently reminded Satan of the words of God teaching us clearly there is no earthly interest that can or should interfere with our spiritual mission.

Obedience Brings Blessings

The modern-day religious climate in America sees freedom as nearly absolute. The idea of being restricted by rules is anathema. Obedience to a law is framed as legalism and anti-Christ. However, the Bible repeatedly teaches obedience is necessary and a blessing.

Obey Your Masters

Paul states that servants are to obey their masters **(Eph. 6:5-9)**. Today this might be stated as *"employees obey your employers."* The point is the same: submit to the one who has authority over you. It is what pleases God. Thus, He will put it down to your account and bless you.

The modern rewrite of this passage would state, *"Obey your masters only when it pleases you and provides both immediate and long term benefits. If you don't feel like doing it, then don't. You are not called to be trapped by rules and restrictions on your happiness."*

Those who respect God's word will see the blessing in obeying their masters.

Obey Your Parents

Again, Paul notes children are to obey their parents **(Eph. 6:1-3)**. Why? It blesses the children. He specifically states, *"for this is right."* Doing right is always a blessing, whether or not we receive an immediate reward or instant pleasure.

While many religious people might agree with this truth in word, in deed they ignore it. Consider the father or mother that caves to their children wanting to dress immodestly or get involved in drinking, dancing, or some other form of immorality. Perhaps the rule is *"no drinking,"* but when that rule is broken no serious consequence follows. Why? Many parents don't want to be the *"bad guy"* and drive their children away by being too strict. This attitude has led to a lost generation; a generation without respect for authority and unable to practice self-discipline.

Children who respect God's word will see the blessing in obeying their parents.

Obey Your Husbands

Okay, we've gone to meddling. Not really. It is Scripture. The older women are to teach the younger women to be *"obedient to their own husbands"* **(Titus 2:5)**. Older women are you taking that to heart? Or, by your example and snide comments do you teach younger women to disrespect their own husbands?

Obedience to a husband does not diminish the dignity of the wife. Rather, it establishes it. Why? Because God said to do it. It is right. Therefore, it leads to dignity, not away from it.

Yet, society and the larger part of the religious people around us say that a wife who is submissive to her husband is oppressed. She needs to get out and establish herself in a career, have her own identity, be her own person. Let the husband stay at home and care for the children.

Of course, the husband has an obligation to love, nurture, cherish, and sacrifice for his wife **(Eph. 5:25-32)**. That being stated, an obedient wife is a happy wife. She will help lead an ungodly husband to faithfulness **(1 Pet. 3:1-5)**.

Wives who respect God's word will see the blessing in obeying their husbands.

Obey Christ

Some of the more conservative religious folks will agree with all of the above points, but rebel on this one. Their view is that obedience is an attempt to earn salvation. Hence, they strongly condemn any notion that doing something, adhering to a strict standard, is required to go to heaven. Yet, we see this in **Hebrews 5:9**, *"And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him."*

Obedience to Christ, to His law, is absolutely essential to salvation and eternal redemption. We are to obey from the heart **(Rom. 6:16, 17)**. It is not a mere outward act, but a humble submission to the Savior. It is respect for His total authority over our lives. It is the Law of Liberty that leads to freedom in Christ **(Jas. 1:25)**. Obedience to the Lord brings blessings, all spiritual blessings and many earthly ones as well **(Eph. 1:3)**. Living by the principles of God's word is the right thing to do. To rebel against them in some delusion of being free is detrimental to anyone.

People who respect God's word will see the blessing in obeying Christ.

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FEEDING THE 5000

"And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick. When it was evening, His disciples came to Him, saying, this is a deserted place, and the hour is already late. Send the multitudes away, that they may go into the villages and buy themselves food. But Jesus said to them, they do not need to go

away. You give them something to eat. And they said to Him, We have here only five loaves and two fish. He said, bring them here to me. Then He commanded the multitudes to sit down on the grass. And He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed and broke and gave the loaves to the disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitudes. So they all ate and were filled, and they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments that remained. Now those who had eaten were about five thousand men, besides women and children (Matthew 14:14-21).

Jesus, upon hearing of John's death, sought to find some place to be alone. But His popularity would not allow such solace. Jesus got in a boat; the people followed the shoreline chasing after Him. These people had no food; they needed help from somewhere. Jesus' compassion, again, provides a full meal for the great crowds that continued to follow Him. Herod Antipas' earlier banquet provided food for guests who were not hungry; this ruler sought approval and applause. Jesus, though, wanted hungry people to have something to eat. Like Moses before, Jesus feeds the great throng in a deserted place; they are too far from home to return; they had to stay with Jesus. Does Jesus feeding the 5000 remind us of an even greater meal—His own body and blood? Giving thanks and breaking the loaves is repeated in the Passover Feast celebrated by Jesus and the Apostles. *"Take, eat; this is my body." Here is the cup: "Drink from it, all of you."* The true Messianic feast, the feast of the kingdom is coming soon. The true, ultimate exodus is now possible.

Bread, the staple of life, provides many lessons. The disciples having only five loaves and two fish could not feed the people. Another feeding miracle occurs in **Matthew 15**; again the disciples turned to Jesus for help. Soon Jesus warns His followers about yeast, the leavening influence of the Pharisees (**Matthew 16:6**). Did the people understand what had happened? After the meal was finished, twelve baskets of leftovers were gathered. The people were full—fully satisfied, gorged, perhaps as never before. Did they think at least a little bit about the power that had fed them? Even Jesus' disciples did not really get the point. They claimed to understand what the kingdom was all about (**Matthew 13:51**). Now, when put to the test by the Lord (**John 6:6**), they failed. Do they not yet understand that Jesus is the answer to whatever the problem may be? Living in this age of modernity, when everything is questioned and nearly every conclusion is denied, our vision of God's power to save us can be clouded. Self-sufficiency and pride result in scoffing at the power that fed the multitude, at the power that raised Jesus from the grave, at the power that can save each of us from ourselves. John's account says that Jesus is the Bread of Life. Will His followers ever learn that man does not live by bread alone? Will we?

Randy Harshbarger

Modern "Pride"

Take a good look around you and one can't help but see the many accomplishments of modern man, and they are NOT inconsiderable. We have sent probes to all the planets in the solar system and even beyond. We have sent men to the moon and brought them safely home again, as well as to the deepest parts of the ocean. We have nearly instantaneous worldwide communication. Modern medicine is an absolute amazement in its abilities. Each of these statements, I believe, cannot be successfully refuted.

This does not, however, give us the right to look down our noses at our ancestors. Beginning machinists should all recognize the following sequence: A on B, B on A, B on C, C on B, A on C and C on A. In case you don't this is the sequence to grind three plates together in order to create three identical lapping plates of nearly perfect flatness plus or minus a few thousandths of an inch. No tools; no power, no kidding! It just takes the understanding of offsetting errors and the willingness to be persistent through several hours of seeming boredom. A man with determination can actually get within .0005 inch, plus or minus.

Paul said, *"For if a man thinketh himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself."* (**Gal. 6:3**) Solomon said, *"Pride goeth before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall."* (**Prov. 16:18**) Just because they didn't do things our way doesn't mean they were stupid or ignorant. Just because we do things they could not doesn't mean we're better. After all, whose shoulders are we standing on in order to see further? Isaac Newton, whose first degree was not in Physics or Math but in Theology, made a statement to that effect.

Cleveland Reddinger

Recently *National Geographic* ran an article about the Alaskan bull moose. The males of the species battle for dominance during the fall breeding season, literally going head-to-head with antlers crunching together as they collide. Often the antlers, their only weapon are broken. That ensures defeat. The heftiest moose, with the largest and strongest antlers, triumphs. Therefore, the battle fought in the fall is really won during the summer, when the moose eat continually. The one that consumes the best diet for growing antlers and gaining weight will be the heavyweight in the fight. Those that eat inadequately sport weaker antlers and less bulk. There is a lesson here for us. Spiritual battles await. Satan will choose a season to attack. Will we be victorious, or will we fall? Much depends on what we do now--before the wars begin. The bull-moose principle: Enduring faith, strength, and wisdom for trials are best developed before they're needed.

Craig Brian Larson

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

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We offer Correspondence Courses

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WEDNESDAY EVENING BIBLE
CLASS - FORGIVENESS
JIM STAUFFER

SUNDAY SERMON: WAIT FOR THE
LORD



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