

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"

MARCH 25, 2018

Conflicts Among Men (God speaks clearly)

by Jim Stauffer

There will always be conflicts among men as we all spend our lives growing in knowledge and maturity. One thing is certain. If we do not recognize both our differences in knowledge and understanding but also that we both can and often are very sincere in what we believe, we will make little progress narrowing those differences.

One of the major obstacles in clearing up our differences in understanding of Scripture is to be completely fair with each other. We must accurately state the position of the other party or we will simply alienate them. We also run the risk of not addressing the actual issue at hand when we misrepresent their beliefs.

Let us use Calvinism as our first example. We all know the five petals of the tulip that stand out as the fundamental position of those who fully understand what Calvin taught and accept it wholeheartedly. **Total Hereditary Depravity** is disposed of when Jesus says the Kingdom of heaven is made up of those who are like children, humble and innocent (**Mat. 18:1-6**). If they were born depraved He would not have used them as an example of what we need to be to enter the kingdom of heaven.

Unconditional Election is invalidated when the Lord tells His disciples to *preach the gospel to all creation. He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved. But he who has disbelieved shall be condemned.* (**Mark 16:15,16**) Our election is obviously based on obedience to certain commands such as baptism.

Limited Atonement is immediately proven inaccurate when the Scripture says Jesus died for every man (**2 Cor. 5:14; Heb. 2:9**). He claims through His word atonement is for every man.

Irresistible Grace is shown to be erroneous when Paul tells us faith comes to those who hear the word of God and act on that faith by obeying the command to be baptized (**Rom. 10:17; Gal. 3:26,27**).

Perseverance of the saints is clearly false as shown by the apostle Paul in his letter to the Galatians. (**Gal. 1:6-9; 5:4**)

So, will those points just made cause everyone who worships with a church that teaches Calvinism to immediately leave and find someone who does not teach such? I think by experience we all know the answer to this is no.

The fact is many people who worship in denominational churches that teach Calvinism do not believe that in their hearts. It becomes imperative in our discussions with them to be aware of this and discuss the validity of what they actually believe. If we begin our discussion by telling them they believe this we will likely alienate them and lose any opportunity to study with them.

One of the tenets of Calvinism that permeates the religious world is the doctrine of salvation by faith only. Many religions and therefore many people espouse this concept. Nearly as many do not fully understand the implications of accepting this doctrine.

For instance while many will say they believe in salvation by faith only, they begin to take a few steps back when they realize what that means. Most of those people would not accept the idea that God places faith in the heart with no consideration to the will of that man. They further do not believe that man will be saved if he disregards what Scripture says and does not comply with the commands of the Lord.

What they really believe is man cannot earn his salvation by doing works of merit. They believe, just like anyone who has studied Scripture that man cannot live a good enough life to warrant his own salvation. We all believe we are made worthy of God's gift of salvation by the blood of Jesus Christ that cleanses our sins (**Heb. 9:13,14**).

They believe like you and I that a person who has had his sins forgiven because of his faith in the blood of Christ must continue to strive to live a life

representative of the righteousness of both God and Christ (**Eph. 5:1,2**).

The arguments for these beliefs are as follows: We are saved by the grace of God when we hear His word and develop faith in it (**Eph. 2:8,9**). Now many false teachers say this proves a man does nothing in the way of activity to achieve salvation. But that is not what that passage says. It is no more grace alone that saves us than it is faith alone. Look at **Rom. 3:24,26**. **Verse 24** says we are justified and redeemed by His gift of grace. **Verse 26** then says He justifies us because we have faith in Christ. It is obvious both are necessary.

Now that we know we need both our faith and His grace to be saved, look at what James tells us about faith. In **verse 18** he says the person who actually acts on his faith proves his faith whereas the one who does not shows no evidence he has faith. In **verse 19** he ridicules the faith only position by saying even the demons believe. They just do not live according to faith. In **verse 20** he concludes that faith without works of obedience is useless. And this seems to be consistent with what most men on either side of the discussion believe. He then concludes with the example of Abraham who at the command of God took his son Isaac to the mountain and attempted to offer him as a sacrifice. It was because of his action that God recognized Abraham believed Him and it was *reckoned unto him as righteousness, and he was called the friend of God (Verses 21-23)*. He concludes in verse 24 and 26 *You see a man is justified by works and not by faith alone.....For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.*

I believe this article represents accurately what the Scriptures on these matters. I believe it accurately represents many I have had discussions with on these matters. What are you waiting for? Take your stand for the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

UNDERSTANDING JESUS

"When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments did you take up? They said to Him, Twelve. Also, when I broke the seven for the four thousand, how many large baskets full of fragments did you take up? And they said, Seven. So He said to them, how is it you do not understand?" (Mark 8:19 -21).

Why don't we understand Jesus? Why don't we "get it?" Why do we so often miss the real point of who He is and of what He says? Is there a connection between our failures and our faith? With compassion, Jesus fed the multitudes. For three days the crowds had followed and listened, many coming from a far distance. So it was time to eat. After the scraps were gathered, Jesus and His disciples depart to the other side of the lake. But the disciples "had forgotten to take bread." Now, even those closest to Jesus needed a greater lesson than simply

having one's hunger assuaged. Leaven could be good or bad, depending on the circumstance. The leaven of the kingdom (**Matthew 13:33**) is good leaven. Israel was to rid their houses, etc., of all leaven; in this case, leaven becomes a metaphor for the ungodliness of Egypt. So, too, the leaven of the Pharisees and Herod stood for attitudes of opposition to King Jesus. Were the disciples of Jesus manifesting the same attitudes as these Jewish leaders? Earlier, the Pharisees came asking for another sign. With weariness of spirit, Jesus said no. Now, the disciples lack bread; they also lack the faith to know that Jesus, the one who just fed 4000 people, could provide for them. You saw the 5000; you saw the 4000; you saw the leftovers. And now you say: We have no bread. *"How is it you do not understand?"*

Indeed, how could the disciples not understand! Could the lesson be that we so easily forget about the true bread of heaven, because we endlessly pursue the bread that easily perishes? You have eyes but you do not see; you have ears but you do not understand. Sadly, this was the second time the disciples failed to get the point (**Mark 6:52**). Jesus seems to echo the prophet's words to ancient Israel: *"Hear this now, O foolish people, without understanding, who have eyes and see not, and who have ears and hear not" (Jeremiah 5:21).*

When we read Matthew's statement (**Matthew 16:12**), *"Then they understood that He did not tell them to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees"* we wonder: Did they or did they not get the point? The answer is resolved when we consider that Matthew is telling us that yes, the disciples have a way to go; they are, though, making some progress. Mark highlights their failure to have a mature faith. Could this be analogous to the Apostle Peter's ups and downs regarding his allegiance to Jesus? Who would disagree that it takes time for our faith to grow? Who would disagree that we, too, have stumbled in unbelief, even when confronted with the power and might of Jesus? Would we, as did the Pharisees, try to test Jesus?

Or, maybe we today don't pay too much attention to what Mark says about Jesus. After all, why bother? We attend faithfully (as we define faithfulness), we pray (at least sometimes in the public assembly), we contribute (after we have spent on everything else), we read the Bible (if we can find it), and we are respectable people (in our own minds, at least). Maybe Jesus is just enough. Be careful not to ask too much from Him. Really seeing and hearing and understanding Jesus could be painful.

Randy Harshbarger

Don't Violate Your Conscience!

Last week's column noted the folly of "Letting our conscience be our guide". It needs a rule book to follow

in order to function properly. But the other end of the spectrum is just as dangerous to our souls and that is why the fourteenth chapter of Romans was written. It is only a few verses long but Paul points out the importance of respecting the pangs of conscience, both our own and our brothers'.

He writes, *"Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations. For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him."* (Vs. 1-3) He has set the context of the chapter to include those things about which God has left us free to decide for ourselves. It is absolutely NOT speaking of doctrinal matters where the Lord has given us a specific path to walk. There we have no choice but to follow the Lord's word. But, as Paul points out, whether or not we eat meat is not a matter of importance to the Lord. We can do either one and still serve Him acceptably. Since that is so we are neither to violate our conscience nor sit in judgment of another's.

Are there times when I may, without sin, violate my conscience? Yes, of course! I was raised to believe that anything you believed was alright as long as you were sincere. It was unacceptable in our home to contradict anyone's belief system. But if Jesus is the ONLY way to the Father, **John 14:6**, then obviously the gospel must be shared in a respectful manner.

Cleveland Reddinger

The Measuring Stick

A small dry goods store in a small rural town was visited by a man from the state's weight and measures department. He found the yardstick being used to sell fabric was one inch short. "That's impossible!" said the owner. "That yardstick was used by my dad and grandfather. They would not have cheated anyone! They were honest, Christian men."

The inspector paused for a second and then said, "Sir, I'm sure your father and grandfather were honest. In fact, since they were so honest what do you think they would have done if they had made this discovery?" Without hesitation, the owner said, "They would have made it right and that's what I'm going to do."

Often people will not accept plain Bible teaching because it is NOT what their parents or close relative or one very influential in their life believed. What do you think those honest parents, family members or close influential friends would have done if they had learned the truth? Will you do any less?

—Paul Sain— Taken from Lincoln Bible Reader

The Clothing of the Godly

People are often identified by the clothes they wear. In the Bible clothing identified people as being widows, harlots, kings, rich men, men, women and wedding

guests. Today, just by looking at a person's attire, we can identify doctors, nurses, policemen, firemen, soldiers, football players, ballet dancers, and homeless people. In **1 Timothy 2:9-10**, the apostle Paul instructs women to dress in a way which *"befits women making a claim to godliness"* (NASB). Certainly it would not be fitting or proper for a soldier to dress in the attire of a bum or for a policeman to dress as a doctor. Likewise, it is improper for the godly to dress in clothing which is characteristic of the ungodly.

When Paul instructs us to wear *"modest apparel"* (**1 Timothy 2:9**), he is in effect commanding us to dress in a way which is proper for godly individuals. Webster's 7th New Collegiate Dictionary defines the word "modest" as "observing the proprieties of dress." It defines "propriety" as "the quality or state of being proper." But what is proper for those who are godly? The inspired apostle himself gives us the answer. *"Modest apparel"* for the person who is godly is apparel that can be worn *"with shamefacedness and sobriety"* (**1 Timothy 2:9**). The phrase *"with shamefacedness"* refers to the fact that a sense of shame is to be demonstrated by our attire. A godly man or woman will dress in a way which shows an appreciation for the fact that God considers nakedness to be shameful (**cf. Revelation 3:18**).

Realizing that God still considered Adam and Eve to be naked even after they had partially clothed themselves with aprons made of fig leaves (**Genesis 3:7-10, 21**), the godly are not satisfied with being partially clothed. But rather, godly men and women dress in clothes which are designed to cover, not reveal. Now ask yourself, "Are shorts, short skirts, halter tops, sun dresses and bathing suits designed to cover or reveal?" Surely a person cannot wear such clothing in public *"with shamefacedness."*

What about the word *"sobriety"* as it occurs in **1 Timothy 2:9**? Both W.E. Vine in his Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, and R.C. Trench in his book Synonyms of the New Testament, agree that *"sobriety"* refers to "that habitual inner self government with its constant rein on all the passions and desires which would hinder the temptation to these from arising." So, godly people dress in a way which hinders temptation. If you profess to be godly, ask yourself, "Are my clothes designed to incite lust or hinder it?" "Do they cause others to stumble, or do they prevent such stumbling?" Often people attempt to justify their clothing by making a claim like the following: "My clothes wouldn't MAKE anyone lust!" But the question is, "Do your clothes HINDER anyone from lusting?"

Those who are interested in conforming to the will of God will be concerned about whether or not they dress in a way that is proper for godly people to dress. Do your clothes identify you as being godly? *"Godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life which now is, and of that which is to come"* (**1 Timothy 4:8b**).

by Steve Klein

Taken from The Beacon Electronic Edition

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.*

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JESUS, THE INCARNATE WORD OF
GOD



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