

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"

MAY 20, 2018

ARE OUR MINDS SET FOR SUMMER?

Jim Stauffer

"Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth."

(Col. 3:1–2 NAS95)

"For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit."

(Rom. 8:5 NAS95)

"But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh." **(Gal. 5:16 NAS95)**

All three passages offer similarly worded solutions to the problem of temptation in the flesh.

I am sure no one misunderstands these passages. All can see what the apostle is attempting to teach us on each of these occasions. Those who have been raised from the waters of baptism to *walk in newness of life* understand the commitment described as setting *our mind on the things above*. We further realize that if we are to *walk by the Spirit* we will be the kind of people whose hearts and minds are directed to *the things of the Spirit*.

The problem comes in the personal application of such principles as we are to have embodied as children of God.

Look at how we react to some things that are a clear indication we have failed in this commitment. It is now officially warm weather. Modesty among both genders will be challenged until the weather cools sufficiently in the Fall. People will begin to wear skimpy clothing designed to show as much of their bodies as they determine is not improper. Short shorts are already being worn for nearly every occasion. They are worn by children at school. Swimming pools will soon be open and many will wear their bathing suits of various exposing styles. Let us not say, any who wear such are minding the things of the Spirit with their minds on things above rather than on things of the earth. Paul speaks to the issue of modesty when

teaching the Evangelist Timothy. *"Likewise, I want women to adorn themselves with proper clothing, modestly and discreetly, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly garments, but rather by means of good works, as is proper for women making a claim to godliness."* **(1 Tim. 2:9,10)** The fact that men are not mentioned in this passage does not exclude them from appropriate dress at all times.

Various sporting activities have begun and will continue throughout the Summer. Many of these are scheduled on Sundays and Wednesdays during meeting times for the local church. Some parents decide this is an acceptable reason to miss services to attend their child's events.

When the church is worshiping as a local congregation of the body of Christ, is it even reasonable to say we are minding spiritual matters or setting our affections on things above while at a ballgame or some similar event in the extracurricular schedule of our children? Aren't we choosing fleshly activity over spiritual? Aren't we failing our brethren by not stimulating and encouraging them as the Hebrew writer says we should do? *"Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near."*

(Heb. 10:23-25)

Every season and occasion is an opportunity for Satan to tempt us. He often does so enabling us to rationalize our actions as a good thing. This can be portrayed as a family support issue. The parent reasoning he needs to support the child. The truth is the parent needs to *train up the child in the way he should go.....* **(Pro. 22:6)**. What he is doing is training the child up in the way he will likely go when he is to make decisions on his own.

We must do better if we are to make our *calling and election sure* (2 Pet. 1:10) and *work out our own salvation with fear and trembling* (Phil. 2:12). The sad thing is not only are we endangering our own souls, we risk the souls of our own children, the ones we love most.

The First Purpose of the Prophecy

Now we begin to take a look at the purposes to be accomplished by this prophecy and the first of these is *“to finish transgression,”* or as my beloved ASV of 1901 says, *“to finish the transgression”*. Now, there are a number of ways to fairly understand this, but remember what we said in an earlier installment of this series: A TEXT taken out of CONTEXT becomes a PRETEXT. I believe the near context helps us to understand just how this should be taken. What had Daniel just been praying about to the Lord? He was confessing the sin of Israel. Read **verses 7-13 (Chap 9)**. The sin of Israel was so great that God, for His own righteousness’ sake, had to practically destroy the entire nation he had so painstakingly established and planted in the Promised Land. To Daniel it would seem any sin which causing God to destroy His own chosen people would have to be the most heinous sin possible, but such was not the case! Gabriel says the nation is not finished rebelling against God. There is an even larger, more blatant sin which lay in their future compared to which their past sin was mere child’s play.

What could that be? How about the rejection and murder of the long promised and anticipated Messiah? I could cite many passages but two will be enough, **John 19:14-16** and **Acts 2:30-36**. They were guilty of murdering their own King! (So are we for it was by Gentile hands the deed was done!) What greater sin could be? Rebelling against a God you cannot see is one thing. Murdering His sinless Son who lived a lifetime among you is certainly another! This would certainly *“finish the transgression”* of Daniel’s people. Read **Matthew 23:32ff**.

Cleveland Reddinger

Partners in Evangelism

Jesus took his disciples on top of a Galilean hill. They looked out on a world dead in sin and destined for hell. Yet, what Jesus accomplished changed everything. He died to remove our sins and was raised to give us life. So, he points to the horizon and says, *“Go make disciples of all the nations”* (Matt. 28:19). What good news! What eternal joy! But, what a daunting task! *“Make disciples of all nations,”* it sounds a little like trying to end world hunger. It’s a good idea, just impossible to accomplish. So, we are tempted to shrug our shoulders, leave it to the professions, and move on. However, when you visit the historical account of how this command was fulfilled you discover it is not beyond

your abilities. In fact, God used ordinary people like us to take the gospel to the nations.

When I find myself low on evangelistic fever, or overwhelmed by evangelistic need, I return to three stories of salvation recorded in **Acts 8,9,10**.^{*} They describe how one person reached one person for Christ. Three people, intertwined in purpose, to bring about what D. Stuart Briscoe called “the redemptive triangle” (Expository Nuggets for Today’s Christians. (p. 114). Baker).

A Seeking Soul

Each story contains a seeking soul. Yes, they are there! God made us so we *“should seek the Lord, in hope that [we] might grope for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us”* (Acts 17:27). Thirsty souls all around us are wasting away in search for the meaning and security that can only be found in the Lord. Sometimes these seekers look like an Ethiopian official who seemed to have it all (**Acts 8:26-ff**). Yet, his life missed something vital.

Other seekers are a bit more arrogant. Life must hit them like a two-by-four, to bring them to their knees. This happened to a religious fanatic named Saul (**Acts 9:1-ff**). For years he ignored the facts and maintained his religious traditions, until the truth could no longer be denied.

Finally, there was a seeker plucked out of the pagan world. A Roman soldier who feared God and did good works. Yet, in spite of all the changes he made, and the good life he lived, he needed to know Jesus (**Acts 10:1ff**).

Luke helps us see that “seeking souls” come from different backgrounds (an African, a Jew, a Roman) and you find them in different places (on a trip, at work, in their home). But, they are there! Even in a sinful city like Corinth God said, *“Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not be silent, ... for I have many people in this city”* (Acts 18:9-10).

A Gracious God

The most thrilling aspect of each story in **Acts 8-10** is the presence of God. The God who is *“not willing that any should perish”* (2 Pet. 3:9) is actively involved in providing opportunities for seekers to find Him. He can counsel courage, *“Do not be afraid, but speak and do not be silent,”* because he promises, *“I am with you”* (Acts 18:10; Matt. 28:20). We must not diminish our responsibility in evangelism, but we must never discount God’s activity in it.

The Ethiopian heard the saving gospel because God knew where he was. God prepared his heart through worship and the words of Isaiah. God sent an angel to recruit Phillip, and the Spirit told Phillip to overtake the chariot. I wonder, did God make a pool of water available just when the Ethiopian was thinking, “Should I be baptized?”! The Lord’s activity in the salvation of Saul

is as obvious as it is jarring. The resurrected Lord speaks to Saul and strikes him blind. Then God gives Saul a vision, speaks to Ananias, heals Saul's blindness, forgives his sins, and fills him with the Holy Spirit. God's gracious acts are in every verse of the account!

The Roman soldier was saved because God heard his prayers and saw his generosity. God then sent an angel to the soldier, a vision to Peter, and the Holy Spirit fell on the whole family.

We are not promised miraculous encounters with angels or visions today, but we can't miss the principle. God wants people to be saved and He is actively involved in giving people those opportunities (**1 Cor. 3:7**).

This is why prayer is such an important part of sharing the gospel. Paul wrote, *"pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ,...[and] that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak"* (**Col. 4:3-4**). God opens doors for the gospel and gives courage to the speaker.

A Willing Worker

We often call these accounts, "conversion stories," and focus on what a person must do to be saved. However, I wonder if they are not equally, "evangelistic models" which focus on what we must do to share the gospel. In each account God could have told the lost person what they needed to do to be saved. After all, Jesus spoke directly to Saul and through an angel to Cornelius. Yet, here is a profound truth: God chooses to use disciples to share the gospel with the lost.

God uses people like Philip who was willing to be interrupted from a busy schedule to share the gospel with one person at a Gaza rest stop. He uses workers like Ananias who is willing to take a risk to share the gospel in a scary situation. He uses hardheads like Peter who are willing to conquer their prejudice to share the gospel with those who are different.

Are there any "good and honest hearts" left who seek the Lord? I think so! Does God want them to be saved? Certainly! What is missing? We need willing workers.

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

*Luke's purpose in Acts 8-10 is to show how the gospel included the Gentiles. An African took the gospel home to Ethiopia (Acts 8); the "apostle to the Gentiles" was commissioned (Acts 9); and a Roman soldier becomes the test-case of Gentile inclusion (Acts 10,11,15). Biblically, the message of this section is: "the gospel is for all," which is a needed lesson for any effective evangelist.

Extra Bits:

Bob Owens & Acts 8-10

My faith was first set on fire by **Acts 8-10** after listening to a sermon by Bob Owen on the text (West Allen Church of Christ, around 1997, I believe). I pray the message will once again fire up someone's faith.

Two Favorite Stories

(They sound like "preacher stories," their original source

is probably lost beneath a homiletical heap of forgotten homilies.)

Make A Difference

A little boy was walking down the beach and tossing starfish into the sea. An old man watched him for a while and walked up behind him and said, "Young man, what are you doing?"

The little boy explained, "When the sun comes up these starfish dry up and die unless they get back to the water. So, I'm throwing them into the sea to save them."

The old man said, "Son, this beach goes on for miles. There are millions of starfish. Do you think you're going to make a difference?"

The little boy looked at the starfish in his hand, flung it into the ocean, and said, "I just made a difference to that one."

Pray for Snakes

In a small town lived a mean, sinful family. They were known for their drunkenness, meanness and foul behavior. One day the youngest son John got bit by a snake and looked like he would die.

They called for the preacher. The preacher came, and the family said, "Please pray for John!" The preacher said, "Why? You haven't cared for the Lord all these years?" They pleaded, "Please!"

So, the preacher prayed, "God we thank you for sending this snake to bite John to bring him to his senses. Now, please send one to bite Sam, Frank, Tommy, and a real big one to bite the old man. Your snake has done more than all my preaching and congregational warnings. So, we pray for bigger and better snakes."

God's grace can sometimes come through pain. "It is good for me that I was afflicted, that I might learn your statutes" (**Psalms 119:71**).

By Tim Jennings

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[taken from focusmagazine.org](http://focusmagazine.org)

It is easy to determine when something is aflame. It ignites other material. Any fire that does not spread will eventually go out. A church without evangelism is a contradiction in terms, just as a fire that does not burn is a contradiction.

[Christian Theology in Plain Language, p. 162.](#)

The young salesman was disappointed about losing a big sale, and as he talked with his sales manager he lamented, "I guess it just proves you can lead a horse to water but you can't make him drink." The manager replied, "Son, take my advice: your job is not to make him drink. Your job is to make him thirsty." So it is with evangelism. Our lives should be so filled with Christ that they create a thirst for the Gospel.

Preaching, November-December 1985.

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

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SICK IN NEED OF PRAYERS:

JAN PATRICK, STEPHEN KIMKER,
STEVE WIMP AND THE MOTHER
OF ALMA BAUMGARTNER

SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE CLASS:
CHRISTIAN PARENTING PART 2 -
RON PECK TEACHER

WEDNESDAY BIBLE CLASS:
ANGELS AND DEMONS -
JIM STAUFFER TEACHER

SUNDAY MORNING SERMON:
DO YOU KNOW JESUS?



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