

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.

September
23
2018

Motivation in Spreading the Gospel

by Chuck Bartlett

(Chuck Bartlett will be the speaker at our Gospel Meeting beginning this Sunday. A separate flier with the detailed information will follow.)

There is no question that Satan would like for God's people to keep the gospel to themselves. This is why Christ admonished His people to not put their light under a bushel (**Matt. 5:15**). Saints find no joy in having the light and keeping it to themselves. Sharing the good news of Jesus Christ comes naturally to children of God because of the many things that motivate them. **Here are just a few:**

They are commanded

Those who make it their aim to please God, know that they must walk by faith (**Heb. 11:6**). This entails listening and doing what we are told (**Rom. 10:17; Jas. 1:22**). Jesus plainly stated that we ought to spread the good news (**Mk. 16:15; Matt. 28:19-20**). After all, when you love the Lord, you will keep His commandments (**Jn. 14:15**). That is plenty of motivation to teach others. But there is more.

They are aware of the terror of the Lord

Prior to becoming a Christian, one is first convicted of sin and their terrible state in being lost without hope (**Eph. 2:12**). The idea of losing one's soul with eternal punishment was part of the reason people became Christians. This, in turn, meant, *"knowing therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men;"* (**II Cor. 5:11**). This, too, is plenty of motivation to teach others. But there is more.

They had people that helped them

When Jesus taught the lesson of extending mercy because you received mercy (**Matt. 18:23-35**), it

caused Christians to appreciate those who taught them. The fact that others brought them the good news motivated those of the body of Christ to go out and spread the good news. Being concerned for others can come as a direct result of having had people concerned for them. This, too, is plenty of motivation to teach others. But there is even more.

They have joy in planting and watering

No one enjoys telling anyone bad news. But that's not what we are dealing with. The gospel is nothing but good news. It matters not what personal hardships we are going through, it's hard to keep the story of Jesus Christ and salvation to ourselves (**Acts 8:4**). When one is thrilled to sow the seed of God's word, just imagine how they feel when there is a harvest (**Lk. 15:10**). Planting and watering is a joy when we know we can do that and leave the rest with God (**I Cor. 3:6-9**). This, too, is plenty of motivation. But there is even more.

They know it helps them get stronger

This point is connected with our previous point. When you share good news that is for someone else, as a bearer of the news, you share their joy. In this case, what you are telling them, is for the listener and for the speaker alike. It's like when we are told that when we teach, do we not teach ourselves (**Rom. 2:1-3**)? The more we tell others about Jesus, it helps us stay strong and focused. This is exactly why saints are told it is better to give than receive (**Acts 20:35**). By giving you get so much more in return and that is especially true to sharing the gospel. This, too, is plenty of motivation. But there is even more.

They know the laborers are few

Just knowing there is an important task and few

workers, causes brethren to pull up their sleeves and get to work (**Matt. 9:37-38**). God's people are workers and want to be useful in the kingdom. Just knowing there is so much to be done, they are full of zeal (**Titus 2:14**). The big question is: How can God's people not be motivated to go and teach the gospel?

THE SILENCE OF THE SCRIPTURES

Jim Stauffer

Respect for authority has always been about obedience to the instruction given by that authority. A primary aspect of that respect has been to reject any enhancement of what was spoken by the one in authority. An excellent example of this temptation is when two siblings are about to undertake an endeavor and one says to the other, "Dad is not going to like this." The reply is, "He never said we could not do it." The two positions on respect for the silence of the accepted authority is often represented in our every day lives.

When it comes to Scripture God has warned mankind in every dispensation to revere His word and not to alter it in any way. Just as importantly we must respect His right to such authority in matters regarding our conduct as individual servants in the kingdom and our congregational activity as local assemblies of the kingdom. He said to Adam and Eve, *but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said you shall not eat from it or you will die. The serpent said to the woman, You surely will not die!* (**Gen. 3:3,4**) From the very beginning any alteration of God's word was sinful and such conduct met with punishment.

The question for some then is where God is silent are we free to act? To further clarify, if God doesn't specifically identify something as wrong is it within the authority of man to practice it? The writer of Hebrews illustrates how wrong it is to act upon the silence of God. He taught the Hebrew Christians a new law (covenant) was what enabled Jesus to be their High Priest. (**Heb. 7:12**) He tells them Jesus could not be their High Priest if the Law of Moses was still in effect. He taught this by using God's silence. **Heb. 7:14** *For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, a tribe with reference to which Moses spoke nothing concerning priests.* The point he makes is the Law of Moses demanded its priests be from the tribe of Levi and it was not necessary for God to say they could not come from Judah for that to be respected.

Man has chosen to violate the silence of God from the beginning until now. In the history of the church this battle has been waged since the apostles have gone to the grave.

Just think about the contention made by the Catholic Church that the traditions of the church can actually override Scripture. And, before we go further is

that not obeying man rather than God? (**Acts 5:29**)

Their structure testifies to this belief when they have one who is called the Pope and represents himself as the Vicar of Christ. It must be church tradition for there is not one identified as such in the Scriptures. Any reference to Peter being the first Pope is refuted by two incidents in his life. **Mat. 8:14** identifies Peter as a married man. If he was the first Pope, from where does the vow of celibacy come? It is not in Scripture either. A second incident is when Paul had to confront Peter to his face for his sinful actions that led to division among the brethren (**Gal. 2:11-13**). This teaches us there was no superiority among the apostles.

During the Reformation Period in history error was taught over the very issue of the silence of the Scripture. Martin Luther believed and practiced the idea that where God was silent, man had the right to authorize. Ulrich Zwingli opposed him saying the silence of the Scriptures actually limited us to those things authorized by God.

We continue to see the fruit of this digression today. Scripture teaches us to, *...make melody with our hearts to the Lord* (**Eph. 5:19**) with vocal music in our worship of God. Yet men have decided it "sounds" better with instruments. Sounds better to whom, God or them? Scripture teaches us, *So faith comes from hearing and hearing by the word of Christ and For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.* (**Rom. 10:17; Gal. 3:26,27**) Yet we continue to see some baptize infants who are obviously unable to understand the word and obey it.

Peter's words to us should solidify the appropriate reverence in our hearts for His word and prevent us from action to please ourselves where He is silent. **1 Pet. 4:11** *Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.*

THE CHURCH AND THE KINGDOM

Sometimes we try to make a distinction between the church and the kingdom. We say that the church is the *ecclesia*, the called out body of God's people; that is what *church* means. *Ecclesia* is a neutral word— you determine by context whether the called out body or assembly is a religious gathering, or perhaps, a civil gathering, such as the one in **Acts 19:41**. *"And when he had said these things, he dismissed the assembly."* Kingdom refers to the rule or reign of God in the hearts of men and women; it is spiritual in nature and intent. *"Nor will they say, 'See here!' or 'See there!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you"* (**Luke 17:21**).

Sometimes, though, kingdom refers to earthly kingdoms; in this case, kingdom still embodies the rule of a king, but the usage is secular rather than spiritual. *"Then Solomon sat on the throne of his father David; and his kingdom was firmly established"* (1 Kings 2:12).

Is it helpful to understand that church means one thing and kingdom means another? Yes. Any honest attempt to better understand Bible teaching is helpful. We do need to be careful about making some kind of artificial distinction the Bible does not make. We could say that God has always had a kingdom. That is, He has always had people who yielded to His reign, His authority. The Israelites were to become *"a kingdom of priests"* (Ex. 19:6). Has He always had a church? In terms of the Messianic church or kingdom that prophets spoke of, no. Many passages anticipate the coming kingdom (Isaiah 2; Joel 2; Daniel 2). If these passages anticipate a kingdom to come, would that not mean that the thing of which they spoke, the kingdom, had not yet come? Yes! What about the congregation, or church, or assembly in the wilderness (Acts 7:38)? Did Israel constitute the church or kingdom of which the prophets spoke? No! Were the Israelites, God's chosen, called-out special people? Yes! Taking one term or phrase and then constructing an entire, exclusive body of teaching can be dangerous. Systematizing the teaching of the Bible can result in teaching that is incomplete or inaccurate.

When Jesus said, *"I will build my church,"* He was speaking of the same thing the prophets of old spoke of. In the same context Jesus said: *"And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven"* (Matthew 16:19). Clearly, Jesus meant that the church and kingdom were one and the same. By the giving of His life on the cross, Jesus built His church—the called out spiritual body of people who would respect His authority. By the giving of His life on the cross, Jesus established His kingdom—the Messianic kingdom—people who would respect the will of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Fine line distinctions where there are none do not help.

Randy Harshbarger

Just What Are You Looking For?

I went door-knocking shortly after I got here as many preachers do when they get to a new work. I was simply inviting people to come and visit the Church of Christ in their neighborhood. I will never forget speaking to one individual who lived within a stone's throw of the building who, upon being invited to visit and bring their small children for Bible Class replied, "Yeah, I really believe in God and I'm waiting for a sign as to which church to go to and then I'll go." Here were two people from the church who had come to their home and in a friendly manner invited them to walk 500 feet to investigate a

church that cared enough to seek them out – and they're "Waiting for a sign!"

What kind of a sign? They didn't know!

How would they recognize it? They didn't know!

Where were they looking for this sign? They weren't!

Are you looking in the Bible? Not really.

What are you doing in the meantime? Nothing really.

Let me be blunt: This person wasn't being honest.

They were lying to us, to God, to themselves and to their children. They weren't looking for a sign they were looking for an excuse! They needed an excuse to make their sorry selves feel OK about ignoring their children's need to know about God. About ignoring their own need to know and obey God. This "Looking for a sign!" garbage just fills the bill because, "Hey! It's all God's fault because He didn't give me a sign! You can't blame me!"

Meanwhile, in the Scriptures there are plenty of plain, simple commands to be obeyed that are there for the reading. Among them is "Forsake Not! (Hebrews 10:25).

Cleveland R. Reddinger Jr.

Recognizing Who Has The Authority

This illustration is well known but here it is for the record:

In U.S. Navel Institute Proceedings, the magazine of the Naval Institute, Frank Koch illustrates the importance of obeying the Laws of the Lighthouse. Two battleships assigned to the training squadron had been at sea on maneuvers in heavy weather for several days. I was serving on the lead battleship and was on watch on the bridge as night fell. The visibility was poor with patchy fog, so the captain remained on the bridge keeping an eye on all activities.

Shortly after dark, the lookout on the wing reported, "Light, bearing on the starboard bow."

"Is it steady or moving astern?" the captain called out.

The lookout replied, "Steady, Captain," which meant we were on a dangerous collision course with that ship.

The captain then called to the signalman, "Signal that ship: 'We are on a collision course, advise you change course twenty degrees.'"

Back came the signal, "Advisable for you to change course twenty degrees."

The captain said, "Send: 'I'm a captain, change course twenty degrees.'"

"I'm a seaman second-class," came the reply. "You had better change course twenty degrees."

By that time the captain was furious. He spat out, "Send: 'I'm a battleship. Change course twenty degrees.'"

Back came the flashing light, "I'm a lighthouse."

We changed course.

Max Lucado, *In the Eye of the Storm*, Word Publishing, 1991, p. 153.

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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Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship

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FAITH THAT BRINGS THE
VICTORY



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