

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 19, 2019

COMING TO THE MEETING?

Jim Stauffer

There will be many reasons for anyone who loves the Lord and has a hope of eternal life to attend this meeting.

First there is this: *"I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the LORD.'"* (Psalm 122:1) So many people claim to love the Lord. Yet many do not see the conflict in their words and their failure to act out of love for the Lord. Their lives are centered around many things here on earth such as family (Mat. 10:34-37) No one, least of all me, would ever suggest we should neglect the care and love of family. But Jesus has clearly said He and His will are to come before family. When He was told His family was waiting outside to speak to Him, His reply was ...*"Who is My mother and who are My brothers?" And stretching out His hand toward His disciples, He said, "Behold My mother and My brothers! 'For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother.'"* (Matthew 12:48-50) Family is important, but our spiritual family is of supreme importance.

The lessons of this meeting are designed to instruct us how to have godly families. Families who will not be left behind when we go to the House of the Lord, because they will be there too. How wonderful it is when our earthly families are a part of the family of God with us.

But others will fail to attend because they need to give attention to business affairs. Their financial needs will take preference over their spiritual needs. Again, Jesus, the Savior of mankind said this, *"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 'But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.'"* (Mat. 6:19-21) God knows our hearts and that knowledge is confirmed when we choose personal profit over worshiping God and

studying His word. Someday we may very well find ourselves in the situation of the rich man of **Luke 12** who was selfish with his great harvest and chose to dote upon himself. *But God said to him, You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?* (Luke 12:20)

Yet, others will simply seek pleasure rather than giving attention to matters spiritual. In **Matthew 24**, Jesus teaches a lesson on this very attitude. He first says in **verse 36**, speaking of His second coming, *"But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone."* In this text He is addressing our need to be prepared each day of our lives for His coming because we know not when it will be. He then gives the example of the days of Noah to illustrate. *"For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so will the coming of the Son of Man be."* (Matthew 24:38-39) Both Peter and Paul warn us the coming of the Lord will be as a *"thief in the night"* (1 Thess. 5:2; 2 Pet. 3:10).

Now we have a decision to make. Answering these and even other questions is a good start. Do we love to go to the House of the Lord? Are we anxious to spend time with our spiritual family in worship to God and a study of His word? Will our financial concerns take us away from service to the Lord? Or will it be simply the pleasures this world affords that deters us from doing the right thing?

We are reminded of the well known passage that quotes Joshua shortly before his death, *"If it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."* (Joshua 24:15)

INTEGRITY - THE PREREQUISITE TO WORSHIP

by Shane Scott

When I was a little boy I was fascinated by my granddad's preparation to go to church. My Pop was bald except for three strands of hair on top of his head. Every Sunday I would watch as he meticulously combed them into place and then applied copious amounts of hairspray to keep them in place. I often teased him and told him to just shave them off and be done with it, but he held onto them his whole life. I guess Pop wanted everything to look its "Sunday best" as we headed to worship, even his three strands of hair!

Psalms 15 is a song about preparing to worship, but it doesn't say anything about how you look on the outside. The focus of **Psalms 15** is what you look like on the inside – a certain sort of character.

O Lord, who shall sojourn in your tent?

Who shall dwell on your holy hill?

He who walks blamelessly and does what is right and speaks truth in his heart (Psalm 15:1-2).

Who can come into God's presence? The one who walks "blamelessly" (ESV), or as the NASB puts it, "with integrity." It is the person whose entire life – in word and deed, reflects constancy of character.

Think about the root of the word "integrity," *integrate*. Some of you remember the cruel days of segregation, when races were kept separate. Integration brought that which was separated back together. A person of integrity "speaks truth in his heart." How he walks, what he does, and the way he speaks is not segregated from his heart, but reflects his heart. What he does externally is integrated with how he thinks internally.

That's why you sometimes see integrity defined as "doing the right thing even when no one is watching." A person who is not integrated, whose outward actions do not reflect his inward heart, will only pretend to be holy when they think other people are watching. But an integrated person, who does outwardly what he believes inwardly, is consistent. The whole person is a holy person. The sort of person they are at worship is not radically different from the sort of person they are the rest of the week.

Psalms 15 goes on to define four areas of integrity:

A person of integrity is loyal to friends.

who does not slander with his tongue

and does no evil to his neighbor,

nor takes up a reproach against his friend (Psalm 15:3).

To pretend to be a friend to someone while savaging them through gossip reflects a profound disintegration in a person's character.

A person of integrity honors the honorable.

in whose eyes a vile person is despised,

but who honors those who fear the Lord (Psalm 15:4a).

The "vile person" ("reprobate," NASB) is someone whom God has rejected for sinfulness. We can't claim in our heart to love God and His word while at the same time

celebrating that which He condemns. This doesn't mean that we are hateful toward sinners who need the gospel, but it does mean that our values should be gauged by what God thinks.

A person of integrity keeps commitments.

who swears to his own hurt and does not change (Psalm 15:4b).

In no area of my life is my heart segregated from my outward actions more than in keeping commitments. I often have good intentions, but I frequently don't follow through with them. But an integrated person keeps commitments, even if it hurts. And this is crucial, because once we start feeling comfortable with making promises we don't keep, we become numb to the inconsistency of our inner and outer life, and that is the path to hypocrisy.

A person of integrity shows justice to the poor.

who does not put out his money at interest

and does not take a bribe against the innocent (Psalm 15:5a).

It is very tempting to lay integrity aside for a few dollars. The Law of Moses was clear that Israelites were not to loan money at interest (**Leviticus 25:35-38**), that they were not to exploit the poor (**Exodus 23:6-8**). We can't say that we love God who is just and righteous and generous and yet treat others with injustice, exploitation, and stinginess.

The first and greatest command is to love God with our entire being (**Deuteronomy 6:4-5**). This psalm pictures what the unity of heart, soul, and might looks like in practical terms. God doesn't want disjointed worshipers. He wants to be worshiped by those who give themselves completely to Him. And the blessing that God promises is His unshaken fellowship.

He who does these things shall never be moved (Psalm 15:5b).

When a bridge lacks structural integrity it will eventually collapse under pressure. Similarly, a person who lacks spiritual integrity is inherently unstable, and will collapse under the weight of the world. But a person who is integrated, who does the will of God from the heart, will withstand the chaotic circumstances of life because those shifting fortunes don't affect who he/she is on the inside.

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its swelling (Psalm 46:1-3).

My Pop was not always a person whose life reflected the integrity described in this psalm. I am so thankful that toward the end of his life he determined to be the man God wanted him to be. As a carpenter, Pop knew how important a building's integrity was to its lasting value. But more importantly, he knew how important spiritual integrity was to his soul, and to all of us who seek the presence of God.

SEEKING GOD

By Edward O. Bragwell Sr.

The Prophet Isaiah wrote, *“Seek the LORD while He may be found, Call upon Him while He is near.”* (Isaiah 55:6 NKJV)

The writer of the New Testament book of Hebrews tells us that *“God exists and that he rewards those who seek after him”* (Hebrews 11:6 RSV).

There are many who say they are seeking God and often mistakenly think they have found him – while looking for him in the wrong places. He is not going to be found in some “better felt than told” feeling. He is not going to be found in some “transcendental meditation” technique. He is not even going to be found merely by observing his marvelous creation. We can only know who God is and what his will is from the words of divine revelation in the scriptures.

Theologians are fond of saying that God has revealed himself to man in two ways: biblical revelation and natural revelation. Some take that and run with it and say that one can find God either way.

It is true that nature (all of God’s material creation) bears witness to God:

“... Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men with the same nature as you, and preach to you that you should turn from these useless things to the living God, who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all things that are in them, who in bygone generations allowed all nations to walk in their own ways. Nevertheless He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good, gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.” (Acts 14:15-17 NKJV) The psalmist wrote,

“The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork.” (Psalm 19:1 NKJV) The marvelous wonders of God’s creation serve, in legal terms, as corroborating witnesses rather than primary witnesses. The Bible writers give us the primary testimony about God, while the creation serves as corroborating testimony. Without a knowledge of the primary testimony of the biblical writers, the ways of God are past finding out: *“Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!”* (Romans 11:33 NKJV)

Believing scientists and researchers do a great service in corroborating the biblical testimony. They can strengthen one’s faith already gained from a knowledge of the written revelation. But when one begins to let his scientific research modify the primary testimony of the scriptures – Houston, we have a problem. For example, some look at the Genesis account of creation and at their scientific data and have concluded that the Genesis testimony at face value must not be accurate and must be modified. The “days” of creation must be modified to reflect “ages” of creation rather than “days” of creation. The longer creation period then lets them buy more time for “theistic” evolution to have occurred.

By studying the natural creation, one can reach a lot of truly logical conclusions. He learns of the strong evidence that the universe is not eternal, but had a beginning and a maker. Some refer to that maker as a “first cause” or “creator” or “great designer” or even “god.” But he can not know the God (Jehovah) by gazing into the heavens nor digging into the earth. At best, he can use what he finds, to whet the appetite to look for the source that tells him who the “First Cause” is and what his will is for man.

One only knows God by digging into “treasures of wisdom and knowledge” found in the Scriptures– the words that God spoke to the prophets of old and the New Testament apostles and prophets. These spoke and wrote it for those of their generation with the writings being providentially preserved for all generations to come.

Beginning at **Romans 1:18** and going on into **chapter 2**, Paul speaks of the guilt of the Gentiles as well as that of the Jews as a people to show the justice of God in condemning them both as sinners – of the Gentiles, he says they were *“without excuse”* and of the Jews they were *“inexcusable.”* **Chapter 1** is often cited as proof that God’s creation alone is sufficient evidence to produce faith and knowledge of God. Especially **verse 20**, *“For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.”* It does say that the Gentiles were inexcusable because they had the *“things that are made”* to observe and thus should have known and served God.

A close reading of the context shows that Paul is not speaking of coming to know God. In the first chapter section, he speaks of the Gentiles who at one time knew God in their past, but no longer knew him. He speaks of a time when *“they knew God”* as a people, but there came a time when they ceased to glorify him as God. They drifted from knowing, thanking, and glorifying him into their present state of idolatry and immorality. This should never have happened because at sometime in the past God had revealed himself to them through primary revelation (tracing their ancestry back to Noah proves this point), also as a people they had the things made to remind them of God. With all of this “back up testimony” they should never have turned from the God they knew to their pagan ways. They were without excuse, not because they failed to find God through his creation, but because they left God in spite of the revelation they had received in the past and being surrounded by the corroborating testimony of God’s great creation. My friend, if you are seeking to know God, turn to the Scriptures. They contain the confirmed testimony of the people to whom God chose to reveal himself and his will directly. As one of the writers said, *“the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.”* (**1 Corinthians 14:37**). After you have come to know God and initially obey him to be saved, let the marvelous creation of God continually remind you of his eternal power and Godhead in addition to your study of the Scriptures.

Let us be reminded to pray for those we support who are preaching in other areas of this country and also of the world. Remember to pray for Kyle Bennett in Boston Ma., Matt Hodge in Marshfield, Mo. and Cleveland Reddinger in El Dorado, Ks. Overseas we need to remember, Wilfredo Pelino and Jonathan Sapitula in the Philippines as well as Moses Tivane in Mozambique.

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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PSALMS - RON PECK - TEACHER
WEDNESDAY - 1&2 TIMOTHY -
JIM STAUFFER - TEACHER**

**SUNDAY MORNING SERMON:
OUR GOSPEL MEETING:
LIFE, THE WAY IT WAS MEANT TO
BE
BY ROGER SHOUSE**



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