

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 10, 2020

WHY ARE YOU NOT ASSEMBLING?

by Jim Stauffer

This article is written to directly confront something that could easily be happening to brethren in the current atmosphere of sheltering from the Coronavirus.

Bible Classes and sermons are presented on zoom or in some similar format that allows the participants to remain in their homes. If you will, worshiping from their recliner.

Now we are acquainted with the use of the term “ekklesia” in the New Testament. The word refers to the “called out” as in those who have been called *.....out of darkness into His marvelous light* (1 Pet. 2:9). It is used to designate the church in a universal sense, as in Mat. 16:18 where Jesus promises to build His church. In this sense it identifies those who have been *added to the church* (Acts 2:47). It is also used to designate those of local churches who meet and congregate to worship God and do the work of the church (1 Cor. 1:2; Gal. 1:13; 1 Thess. 1:1).

Organized activities such as song worship, keeping the Lord’s Supper, teaching, praying, and giving of our means all take place within these local congregations while assembled. Nothing new here in our understanding of who we are and how we fulfill our responsibilities as a local church.

The issue under discussion for the last 6-8 weeks has been how this local church can and should assemble as commanded and still maintain the honor and dignity it owes to those who have the rule over us (Rom. 13).

We should honor those who have the rule over us and we have thus far. But we must not follow any man blindly for if we do we shall surely fall into the ditch the Lord referred to with the blind guides, the Pharisees of His day. The time in this matter will come when the authorities will rule in a way that causes us to choose between honoring their authority or honoring the One Who gave them that authority.

One thing we must be aware of is language in the rulings that identifies essential business operations. We

can never agree the church of the Lord is non-essential in its operation. If, indeed our ability to assemble is denied because we are not essential, we must disagree. That is exactly what Peter and John were disagreeing with in Acts 5:29 when they said, *...we must serve God rather than men.*

All this is easy to understand. What becomes cloudy for some is recognizing when we are using the government as a foil to cover our own fears and lack of faith.

Now we arrive at the question that at some point will have to be answered. “Are we not assembling out of honor for those who have the rule over us, or are we not assembling because we fear for our physical health and lives. There is a difference. Now be assured, that time will come for some of us. We will need to get out of the recliner and resume a more normal routine of service to the King. What we need to realize is this may well be that occasion when we render health and life secondary to the service of the Lord. Not that we believe any will die, but that our consideration ranks His service above life and health. Listen to these passages, *“Fear not the things which thou art about to suffer: behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life.”* (Revelation 2:10) *“And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of their testimony; and they loved not their life even unto death.”* (Revelation 12:11)

Do not be blinded to the challenge headed your way. It may not even represent a challenge to the majority of our brethren, but those who are strong in the face of this need to help those who may struggle with it. In each of our lives biblical examples will come to the fore. This is one of those times when the words of Joshua come to mind as he prepared the people for his departure. He tried to warn them against the temptation to return to the worship of the idols of their ancestors, by saying, *....as*

for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

Brethren are not as a group, fearful. They have chosen lives of obedience to the Savior in the interest of salvation in the face of criticism from friends and family. They will follow leaders who trust in the Lord. Let us *fear God and keep His commandments* as the wise man has said, for *that is the end of the matter (Eccl. 12:13,14)*.

LORD OF THE SABBATH

“Now it happened that He was passing through some grain fields on a Sabbath; and His disciples were picking the heads of grain, rubbing them in their hands, and eating the grain. But some of the Pharisees said, ‘Why do you do what is not lawful on the Sabbath?’ And Jesus answering them said, ‘Have you not even read what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him, how he entered the house of God, and took and ate the consecrated bread which is not lawful for any to eat except the priests alone, and gave it to his companions?’ And He was saying to them, ‘The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath’” (Luke 6:1-5).

The initial popularity Jesus enjoyed at the beginning of His Galilean ministry is now waning. The Pharisees were always watching (**Luke 5:17**); they questioned His credentials (**Luke 5:21**); and Jesus’ parables make it clear that His kingdom was not going to be the kind of kingdom the Jews expected. Now, He amps up the tension by supposedly violating the Sabbath day (He didn’t; **John 8:46**). Observance of the Sabbath was one of the Ten Commandments. Countless arguments about what constituted work on the Sabbath only elevated their heated debates. Why would Jesus allow and participate in “picking” and “rubbing” and “eating” the grain found in the fields? He answered by appealing to scripture; if this is what David did, why would the Pharisees now try to catch Jesus in doing wrong? The priests allowed David to eat some of the consecrated bread used in the tabernacle; normally, the bread was reserved for the priests (**1 Samuel 21:1-6**). When the bread was replaced each week, the old bread could then be eaten by the priests (see **Leviticus 24**).

The priests were to prepare bread each week and arrange it accordingly in the tabernacle. And they were to provide oil for the lamps. By doing what the Lord commanded, they were obeying the Lord. More, though, they were acknowledging that the Lord was there with them: the bread of the Presence. **Exodus 25:30**: *“You shall set the bread of the Presence on the table before Me at all times.”* The oil and the bread reminded Israel that they depended on God for who they were and for what they had. Gathering olives for oil and wheat for bread was possible because of God’s blessings.

Now Jesus says: *“I am Lord of the Sabbath.”* This claim arrays Jesus against the Jews who were so

scrupulous and careful about Sabbath Day keeping and about maintaining the purity of the Temple. If David could do what he did, how much more could Jesus, the Lord of David, do what He did (**Luke 20:41-44**)? I am here. I am before you. I invite you to be part of My kingdom. The Sabbath was made for man. I am the Son of Man, Lord of all. Eating bread on the Sabbath points to the issue of authority. If Jesus is God’s Son, then He could claim authority from heaven. Accepting what Jesus said about the Sabbath, or any other matter, indicates that one acknowledges Jesus as Lord. *“Why do you call me Lord, Lord, and do not do what I say?”* Will you call upon Jesus as your Lord? The Pharisees would not do that. In fact, they plotted to kill Jesus. But, after all, He did break the Sabbath.

Randy Harshbarger

Paul Preached The Kingdom in the First Century

As anyone who has read the Book of Acts knows, Paul and other preachers in the first century spoke a lot about the promised Kingdom. We read in the first chapter that the disciples asked Jesus before His Ascension about the coming Kingdom (**1:3, 6**). We also read in **Acts 8:12** *“But when they believed Philip preaching good tidings concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.”* Apparently the Kingdom was important to THOSE people at THAT time. In **Acts 14:22** and **Acts 19:8** Paul felt that the Kingdom was worthy of three months’ time in instructing the disciples concerning it. In **Acts 20:25**, in one of the most poignant scenes in all of scripture we see that Paul mentions in his final charge to the Ephesian Elders *“And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I went about preaching the kingdom, shall see my face no more.”* Paul spent three years preaching the Gospel of Jesus in Ephesus, more than recorded in any other place and yet, at the end of his association with them he considers it important that he preached the Kingdom there. In **Acts 28** in verses **23 & 31** we’re told Paul spent precious time teaching about the Kingdom when he met with the Jewish elders of Rome.

Now I have a question: If, as some loudly teach, the kingdom, though promised by the prophets and Jesus Himself, was NOT DELIVERED BUT POSTPONED because of the rejection of Jesus by the Jews, why did the preachers of the first century spend so much time talking about a failed promise? And, how could we depend on a God who could not deliver on a promise centuries in the making? The answer next week!

Cleveland Reddinger

A Healthy Church

by Dan S. Shipley

I had suspected that we were abusing the word “sound” in reference to churches, preachers and others, but didn’t realize how much until I heard a member tell of having a cousin that was not sound and had to be straightened out on the issues. It was not until later that I learned that “cuz” was ‘a deacon in the Baptist church! “Sound” suffers no injustice when applied to either people or churches, provided its use is warranted and in keeping with its scriptural sense. God employed this word “hugiaino” to convey the distinct idea of general healthiness and wholeness (**1 Tim. 1:10; 1 Tim. 6:3; & Titus 1:13, e.g.**); therefore we would do well to use it thusly. As physical health is more than merely having a few healthy organs, so spiritual health involves a great deal more than just being straight on whatever the current issues happen to be. Perhaps if we would speak in terms of spiritual health instead of soundness” we would not be so apt to be misunderstood. For instance, I would welcome a “Directory of Healthy Churches”. Trouble is, who would compile the listings? Who outside the local church could say it was healthy and who inside the local church would say it wasn’t.

In the case of the Laodiceans, God has shown us the possibility of a church being blind to its own condition (**Rev. 3**). They saw themselves as being spiritually healthy, having need of nothing while God saw them as being on their spiritual deathbed “miserable and poor and blind and naked.” Being sick is bad; being sick and not knowing it is worse. Worse, because remedies are neither sought nor received by those who think themselves healthy. If self is to be examined with reference to being in the faith (**2 Cor. 13:5**), why not the many “selves” who act as one? A little honest introspection will show us that being healthy before God is more than big memberships, big buildings, big contributions, having “big” preachers and taking “big” stands on issues.

Let us see that a healthy church is one whose members are truly converted to Christ. Not to the church; not to the family or the preacher; but to the Lord! Everything depends on our attitude toward Him! To love Him is to keep His commandments (**John 14:15**); to serve Him is to serve others (**Mt. 25**). He must be the leaven of our lives; we must continually strive to conform to His image and be careful not to repeat the mistake of the Ephesian church by leaving our first love (**Rev. 2:4**). Let us further see that healthy doctrine is the lifeblood of healthy churches. All members must know and love Bible truth. They don’t resent it being preached plainly and forcefully, they love it (**1 Thess. 2:10**); they desire it (**1 Pet. 2:2**) because they hunger and thirst after righteousness (**Matt. 5:6**). But they not only love truth, they love each other as taught by Jesus in that truth (**Jn. 15:12**). When Christians are cemented together in a local work by love for the Lord, love for His truth, and love for each other, there will be a striving together to do

and be all that God wants — and there will be a healthy church!

Taken from the Auburn Beacon

What is most important in your life - the most pressing issue

In a passage discussing material things and earthly concerns, Jesus said: *“But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”*

Are you focusing on what is most important? How much time, thought and effort is devoted to seeking God, His rule, His will and His kingdom. If we will put what is most important first, He will put everything else in place. An amazing promise. Do you believe it? Maybe you, like me, need to re-think. Jesus asked this question: *“For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul” (Mark 8:36).*

Don Bunting

Anvil Sparks by R.L. Whiteside

Where you are on the road is not as important as which way are you headed.

If you will listen to some incessant talkers, you will decide that practice does not make perfect.

Straight living cannot come out of crooked thinking.

If no one ever abused you because he could not use you, I fear you let him use you.

Knowledge is power, and so is dynamite. Both are dangerous unless handled wisely.

I have heard many big fish yarns, but the evolutionists ask us to believe the biggest one yet. Somewhere in the remote past, they say, a fish flapped out on dry-land and his fins turned into legs. After that, the story of Jonah and the whale seems easy.

Gen. 1:26,27 *“Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.*

Gen. 2:7 *Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.”*

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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NO. 2)**



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