

LENEXA EDIFIER

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November 8, 2020

ARE THE OFFICES WORKING?

“And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.” (Ephesians 4:11–13)

While we know the purposes of apostles and prophets have been completed with the spread of the gospel to the known world (**Col. 1:23**) and the completion of the revelation of God’s mind to man, the other offices named remain in the church today. Those offices remain for the same purposes they existed at the time of this epistle. That is to equip the saints for the work of service. To build up the body of Christ in each locale. This should then attain the unity of the faith and knowledge of Christ in order for us to achieve the maturity demanded of the faithful child of God (**1 Cor. 3:1-3; Heb. 5:12-14**).

It is interesting to note the complaints of the biblical writers in the two passages we have listed. Paul tells the Corinthians in **1 Cor. 3:1-3**, they were still infants spiritually. Therefore, he could not feed them solid food but had to feed them the milk designed for infants. He then concludes that their fleshly led lives made them susceptible to attitudes such as jealousy and strife. This same apostle indicated a man who is naturally or fleshly guided cannot perceive the spiritual message of God. *“But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no one.”* (**1 Corinthians 2:14,15**)

This same message is repeated by the Hebrew writer in **chapter 5:12-14**. And in this text, he says the result of their immaturity and inability to digest the solid food leaves them unable to teach others. Now this is one of the roles we are to reach as *a mature man*.

The church then cannot be built up. It cannot grow in strength when its members do not grow spiritually. It cannot and does not then function as God designed

it. As a result it fails to achieve the mission given to the church as *....the pillar and ground of the truth* (**1 Tim. 3:15**).

Now, how do we know whether we are walking by the spirit or by the flesh (**Gal. 5:16,17**)? Some of the results of walking by the flesh are *....sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, actions, envying,....*(**Gal. 5:20,21**).

How do we recognize what we are saying? By objective criticism of those in these offices.

Brethren, please be guided both as a critic and as one who holds such an office in the church by the following admonition. *“I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beseech you to walk worthily of the calling wherewith ye were called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”* (**Ephesians 4:1–3**)

The following article was written by bro. Bowman in early 2018.

It is amazing how its message resonates with us no matter what year or who is elected. Eternity with God awaits those who can be led by the spirit.

Not My King?

The last year has proven somewhat interesting – and quite entertaining – as various groups of people react to the presidency of Donald Trump. Even a cursory search of political analysis will reveal a consistent theme regarding President Trump’s tenure – polarization. I regularly hear that our nation has never been so polarized as it is now – politically, racially, philosophically, ideologically, economically, and in just about every other “ly”-word that you can imagine. I am no political creature and this is not intended as political commentary. My primary loyalty is to my King Who reigns from heaven, so I don’t worry too much about such matters. I know that my daily life is somewhat affected by what’s happening in Washington, but it seems to me that the shenanigans that characterize national politics don’t change much from one administration to another. People were

polarized in many ways when Obama was elected, when the Bushes were elected, when Clinton, Reagan, Carter, Nixon, Kennedy, Eisenhower, Truman and almost everyone else was elected. One side wins; the other side pouts. Welcome to democracy. I mention these things because there has been one reaction to the present administration that I find comical, sad, and yet strangely telling regarding our present age – the “Not My President” protests. I do not in any way mean to demean anyone for their political leanings, but to publicly deny recognition of a duly elected official who occupies an office of authority over you is at the least childish, and at the most foolish. I understand disagreeing with someone. I appreciate the distaste of recognizing an authority that you absolutely oppose. I’m sure the Christians to whom Paul and Peter wrote had a difficult time respecting the Roman emperors or corrupt local rulers of their day (**Rom.13.1f; 1 Pet.3.17f**). But a refusal to even acknowledge their position is somewhat illogical for one very simple reason – my refusal to recognize Donald Trump as president does not change the fact that Donald Trump is president. I may not like him. I may disagree with his policies, despise his character, decry his antics. I may exercise my free will to oppose his authority in every legal way possible. But none of those things change the reality that he is my president. My refusal to acknowledge the truth does not change the truth.

Such is an important and fundamental principle as it pertains to the authority of Jesus Christ as King. The refusal of so many people to accept Him as King does nothing – nothing – to change the truth of such.

In **Luke 19.11f**, Jesus is nearing Jerusalem. Incidentally, it appears that many among the Jews are willing to accept Him as the Messiah, yet they clearly do not understand the nature of His rule. Luke tells us that He offers a parable because of their expectation of the near advent of a misperceived kingdom. The parable is about a nobleman who is to leave his country, go off to receive a kingdom and then return. Generally, we take note of the fact that the prospective king gives his servants money so that they can conduct his business until he returns. Yet we sometimes fail to underscore **v.14** and the reaction of “*his citizens*” to this man. They “*hated him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, ‘We will not have this man to reign over us.’*” As the parable concludes, the man returns, “*having received the kingdom*” and after judging his servants, turns to “*those enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them*” and punishes them with death (**v.27**). As this parable stands in many ways parallel to the parable of the talents in **Mt.25.14f**, we often underscore the idea of stewardship and overlook what may be the more pertinent element. The man who is about to become king is going to judge everyone – faithful servants;

unfaithful servants; even citizens who refuse to acknowledge his rule. In the context, clearly the Lord is addressing the expectation of an immediate earthly kingdom. But He is also reminding everyone in the crowd – disciples, curiosity seekers, enemies – that He is going to become King and that He is going to judge them, whether they receive Him or not. “Not My King” isn’t going to change the truth.

There is a recurring principle throughout God’s revelation that addresses the issue of man’s free will and his response to God’s reality and authority. What men discovered again and again was that a denial of God does not dismiss God. The truth of His existence, His power, His justice is in no way altered by man’s rejection of such. Consider Pharaoh and his stubborn refusal to acknowledge God. “*Who is the LORD, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the LORD...*” (**Ex.5.2**). Yet his hardness of heart did not change the truth of God’s power or authority. It was not until Egypt had been decimated that Pharaoh relented, submitting to the reality of God’s rule. In **2 Kings 18-19** (and the parallel passage in **Isa.36-37**), Sennacherib of Assyria threatens to destroy Jerusalem, demanding Hezekiah’s surrender. His ambassadors repeatedly dismiss the reality and power of Yahweh, equating Him with the impotent idols of other nations which had fallen before Assyria’s onslaught – “*Who among all the gods of the lands have delivered their countries from my hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem from my hand?*” (**2 Kings 18.32-35; 19.10-13**). Nonetheless, when the angel of the LORD destroyed 185,000 Assyrian troops in one night, Sennacherib departed with a new appreciation for the truth of God’s authority. Again, as Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon (and most of the central portion of the world), is defied in his demands by Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, he expresses a “Not My King” defiance. Determined to throw these young men into a furnace, he boldly challenges, “... *who is the god who will deliver you from my hands?*” (**Dan.3.15**). His answer comes soon as he witnesses God’s power expressed in defiance of the flaming oven. Nebuchadnezzar acknowledged the truth with the decree, “...*there is no other God who can deliver like this*” (**Dan.3.29**). Paul offers the same observation in **Rom.1.18f**, describing the dismissal of God by mankind generally. Though they “*suppressed the truth in unrighteousness...did not glorify Him as God...and did not like to retain God in their knowledge,*” the truth of His power and Godhead was unchanged by their rejection. We can disregard truth, but it does not cease to be truth.

The Bible affirms, in no uncertain terms, that Jesus of Nazareth is King over all creation, reigning not only over those people who have been saved by Him (the church), but over everyone and everything in

existence (**Mt.28.18; Eph.1.20-21; Phil.2.9-11**). It is because of this truth that He can sit in judgment upon all men (**Jn.5.26-29; Rom.14.11-12; 2 Cor.5.10**) – even those who refuse to admit the reality of His person, His nature, His existence, His power. While He does not now demand that every knee bow, there will come a time that He will so express His authority. Whether or not we exercise our will in acknowledgment of Him now, we will bow before Him then.

“Not My King” will ring empty and foolish as we kneel before Him on that day. Perhaps some reevaluation is in order.

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Pillar and Ground of Truth

Catholics sometimes quote **I Timothy 3:15** which states, “...*The church of the living God, the pillar and mainstay of the truth*” to prove that the church is invested with authority to legislate in divine matters. (See Father Smith Instructs Jackson, p. 35; The Question Box, p. 96).

The phrase “*pillar and ground of the truth*” does not mean that the church is the originator of truth or that it can make or change the laws of God, It simply means that it is the upholder, defender and proclaimer of the truth. The apostles often praised churches for proclaiming the truth, “*for from you the word of the Lord has been spread abroad*” (**I Thess. 1:8**). They commended them for defending the truth, “*partakers with me . . . in the defense and confirmation of the gospel*” (**Phil. 1:7**). However, there is not a single verse in all of the Holy Scriptures which indicates that the church has the authority to originate truth or to decree laws for God.

The apostles and prophets (and they alone) were commissioned by the Lord, not to originate truth but to reveal the truth. “*For ever, O Lord, thy word is firmly fixed in the heavens*” (**Psalms 119:98 Catholic Edition RSV**). Their task was once and for all completed for they gave us the written New Testament of Christ.

The responsibility of the church today is simply to follow, defend and proclaim the truth which they revealed. The Catechism for Adults, page 54 says, “The Catholic Church alone has the authority to rule and to teach.” However, the authority is not in the body, but in the Head (**Eph 1:22,23; Col. 1:18**). The ruling is not in the kingdom, but in the King (**Heb. 7:1 2; Rev. 1:5 6**). The authority is not in the church, but in Christ (**Matt. 28: 18; 1 Pet. 3:22**). The church is not

the Savior, but simply the body of the saved (**Acts 2:47; Eph. 5:22-24**).

by David J. Riggs

Taken from The Beacon, Electronic Edition

The Witness of John

“There came a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, to testify about the Light, so that all might believe through him. He was not the Light, but he came to testify about the Light. There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God” (**John 1:6-13 NASV**).

John the Baptist is introduced as a man sent from God. He would speak not of himself, but of the Light; his purpose was to prepare hearts for the work of the Light, the Life, the Word, God’s Son, Jesus Christ. The Synoptics speak of John; and a Jewish audience would have had some inkling of someone, at some time, who would “*make straight the paths of the Lord*” (**Isaiah 40:3**). John told the people to prepare for the advent of the kingdom; true repentance would be a good start. While John doesn’t say that he was the fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy, Jesus does (**Matthew 11:10**). Jesus said: Elijah is here; listen to him (**Malachi 3:1; 4:5**); he speaks of Me!

John’s testimony about Christ (think of OT prophets), was to promote faith in Jesus Christ. Faith in John’s gospel, is the hub that ties all the spokes together. “*Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name*” (**John 20:30-31**). John was not the light; John came into being; Jesus always was. Only Jesus can make rebellious sinners into children of God.

The word *world* sometimes refers to the cosmos, the created heavens and earth; *world* refers to a system of rebellion that stands against Christ; and *world* refers to mankind, men and women, the world God loves and wants to save (**John 3:16**). Yet, the Jews did not know Jesus; that is, they did not

recognize Him as their needed Savior, or even as the creator of the world they were living in. Remember that John is writing after the Light came into the world; but the world did not know Him. In fact, they put Him to death. Why? In the context of John's gospel, they rejected Jesus because they did not truly believe in Him. They could have known Him; they could have believed; but they did not. They were morally culpable, and thus stood justly condemned. This was not what the Father wanted for them.

Jesus came to His own and some did receive Him. When we have faith in Jesus, we have the privilege of becoming part of His kingdom. If faith is the beginning of coming to Jesus, it is not the end (**John 12:42**; here they believed but didn't continue in faith). Think of it! ALL who come to Jesus in faith can be saved. A lame man, a blind man, hungry people, people despised by the world, and a woman who was a sinner can come to Jesus. Think of it! Even you and I can come to Jesus.

Randy Harshbarger

NEWS AND NOTES

Sick in need of prayers:

JAN PATRICK, ALMA BAUMGARTNER, TRUDY MULLEN, RENE RATLIFF, DENESE GORING, RODNEY BLOUNT, DAISY DARNALL, BROOKLYN BOYER, JESSIE GIBSON, PAT GAINES IS AWAITING BACK SURGERY - TRACY RICHARDSON IS SCHEDULED FOR SURGERY 11/19/20. HELEN WISDOM IS BATTLING COVID -19 AS DOES THE SISTER OF DAISY DARNALL.

SUNDAY BIBLE CLASS - EVIDENCES - BILL MILLER

WEDNESDAY BIBLE CLASS - THE PARABLES - BY MULTIPLE TEACHERS (BOTH CLASSES OFFERED ON ZOOM)

SUNDAY SERMON: JESUS TEACHES ABOUT MARRIAGE

Evangelist and Editor Jim Stauffer

Elders:

Ron Peck and Jim Stauffer

Deacons:

Bill Miller

Brandon Jimison

Joe Hurd

"Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons:"

(Philippians 1:1)

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear the gospel - **Rom. 10:17**

Believe in Jesus Christ - **Heb. 11:6**

Repent of sins - **Acts 17:30**

Confess Christ as Lord - **Rom. 10:9,10**

Baptism for remission of sins - **Acts 2:38**

"Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, so that you will be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life." (Revelation 2:10)

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.*

ADDRESS AND HOURS OF WORSHIP

7845 Cottonwood Dr. Lenexa, Kansas,
66216

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/ Worship

Visitors welcome

We conduct in home Bible Studies

We offer Correspondence Courses

Check out the following websites:

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lenexachurchofchrist.org