

LENEXA EDIFIER

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; Eph. 4:11,12

December 13, 2020

A Close Cousin to the Social Gospel by Gardner Hall

For years I've heard warnings about the Social Gospel. That term describes a movement among progressive Protestant churches that began in the latter part of the 19th century, which emphasized the eradication of poverty, alcoholism and other social evils. Though its objectives today sometimes overlap those of the gospel of Christ (concern for the poor, anti-racism, etc.) its tactics and focus are completely different. It tends to focus on changing laws, while the gospel of Christ emphasizes changing hearts. The Social gospel is primarily horizontal - concentration almost exclusively on human relationships. The Gospel of Christ is primarily vertical - focusing on a relationship with God, which in turn improves horizontal relationships. The Social Gospel concentrates on the here and now. The Gospel is centered on eternity, which in turn provides benefits in the here and now.

A close cousin of the Social Gospel is the Gospel of Politics. There may be areas in which the Gospel of Politics sometimes overlaps the Gospel of Christ - for example, fighting abortion. However, the differences in emphasis between the Gospel of Politics and the Gospel of Christ are practically identical to those between the Social Gospel and the true gospel: Changing laws versus changing hearts, socioeconomic concerns versus spiritual ones, here and now versus eternal.

Just as the Social gospel has dominated progressive Protestantism and affected known "progressive" churches of Christ, so the Political Gospel has almost taken over conservative Evangelicalism and that in turn has affected a number of churches of Christ that some label "conservative." Articles, sermons and prayers can be increasingly filled with political code words and phrases as elections approach. The overall effect is distraction from the spiritual emphasis of the gospel.

Just as those who promote the Social Gospel point out the overlapping areas with the Gospel of Christ to justify their change of focus, so do those of

the Political Gospel. But the overlapping areas of concern (racism, abortion, etc.) do not justify the change in tactics and focus. The focus on the Kingdom of Christ will always be on the King and eternity, whereas the primary emphasis of the Social and Political Gospels will always be the here and now.

The solution to the siren call of both the Social Gospel and the Gospel of Politics is a refocus on the Kingdom of God, its tactics and emphasis as revealed by Christ and practiced by those who followed His inspired apostles in the first century. (Espanol en la pagina de Creced. Enlace en el primer comentario) - borrowed from Brethren Online, posted by John Maddocks.

The Lamb of God

"The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! This is He on behalf of whom I said, 'After me comes a Man who has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.' I did not recognize Him, but so that He might be manifested to Israel, I came baptizing in water." John testified saying, "I have seen the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and He remained upon Him. I did not recognize Him, but He who sent me to baptize in water said to me, 'He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.' I myself have seen, and have testified that this is the Son of God" (John 1:29-34 NASV).

What did John the Baptist have in mind when he said: *"Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world?"* The book of Revelation speaks of the Lamb who engages in war against the enemies of His people. This Lamb, with seven eyes and seven horns, is ready for battle (**Revelation 5:6; 17:14**). A warrior lamb who would come and vanquish all foes was embedded in Jewish Messianic expectations. On the other hand, Jews of the 1st c. (and we today), would know the story of Abraham's sacrifice of his son

Isaac (**Genesis 22**); the Lord provided the needed sacrifice. **Isaiah 53** says the lamb was led to the slaughter. Temple sacrifices occurred daily. These images easily come to mind.

Jesus is our Passover lamb. *“Clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new lump, just as you are in fact unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed”* (**1 Corinthians 5:7**). He is the Father’s lamb, given for the sins of the world. Jesus’ vicarious offering for sin atones, redeems, and saves. Jesus, who did not sin, died for our sins as though He were guilty of sin. This is the one that John came to introduce to the Jewish people (and to the world **John 3:16**). John foresaw the death of the Lamb on the cross. He is the one who will save you. The baptism of Jesus by John and then the ascent of the Spirit on Jesus identified, for John, exactly who Jesus was. Did John know that Jesus was his cousin? Yes. Did John know that Jesus was the Messiah? After Jesus was baptized, John knew exactly who Jesus was. His appraisal of Jesus did not depend on human testimony. The voice of God rang forth from heaven. Let it ever ring.

Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away our sin. That serves us notice: we cannot save ourselves. Faith in Christ results in life—life in the Son (**John 20:30-31**). The very purpose of John’s gospel is to help people know that Jesus is the Son of God; this identification runs throughout John’s gospel. People of compunction struggle under the guilt and stain of sin. But the Lamb takes it all away. As Jesus said to the woman sinner, He says to us, *“Go, and sin no more.”* The lamb was slain for the world; importantly, the lamb was slain for you and me. That’s why we join our voices and sing the wondrous story of love.

Randy Harshbarger

The Gospel on Handling Personal Conflicts

We began discussing personal conflict last week and what Jesus tells us to do about it. It is impossible to avoid all conflict and be healthy but perhaps we should also remember an important principle: It took Judas to betray Jesus. Let me explain this.

Long, long ago, in a church far, far away a young preacher got himself fired (Yes, that DOES happen!) While he was feeling sorry for himself an older preacher asked him a couple of questions. ONE: Who makes you angrier than

anyone else on earth? At that moment it was some certain members of the immediate congregation. Then the second question: Who makes you happier than anyone else on earth? His thoughts turned to his wife and children. Then came the bombshell: If you are a healthy and well-adjusted individual they should be the same person! The glaring obviousness of this truth stunned him and now he shares it with you. Now let’s make application!

It took Judas to betray Jesus. The Jewish elders and High Priests couldn’t do it. The Pharisees and the Sadducees couldn’t do it. They were all open enemies. It took a friend to betray Jesus (**John 13:18**). That is why the disciples were surprised and hurt, for it was one of their own! In family conflicts the pain is deeper because of the closeness of the previous bond. Judas betrayed that, but remember, Peter did too! (**Matthew 26:34,75**) Peter came back! The offer of forgiveness was as sure for Judas as it was for Peter, but Judas suffered the sorrow of the world, **2 Cor. 7:10**, and killed himself. The lesson is not to allow conflicts to blind us to or destroy the closeness and love we have as family and friends!

Cleveland Reddinger

The Path To Faith Don Bunting

The path to faith varies from person to person. While one thing catches your attention, something else is meaningful to another. In John, chapter one, we have brief accounts of several people being introduced to Jesus. The chapter lets us see variety in the evidence provided and in what captures attention. As you read John one, notice how much depends on the testimony of witnesses. God intends for us to believe and follow Jesus. Notice these paths to faith.

The preaching by John (and the ancient prophecies he quoted) captured the attention of the priests and Levites as well as others sent by the Pharisees. By use of prophecy, John was able to answer their questions and silence their objections. (**John 1:19-28**).

The path to faith includes the miracles declared in scripture. When John saw the Holy Spirit descend on Jesus after his baptism, John declared Jesus to be the Lamb and the Son of God. His testimony of these things becomes a path to faith for others. (**John 1:29-34**).

Jesus' teaching is a vital part of the path to faith. Before committing to Him, we must hear him out. *"The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus."* *"One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew ... He first found his own brother ... (and said) ... We have found the Messiah ... And he brought him to Jesus."* *An essential section of the path to faith is hearing the words of Jesus. (John 1:35-42).*

Philip believed and became a follower. Philip told Nathanael that they had found the one who fulfills all the words of Moses and the prophets. Nathanael showed his skepticism by saying *"Can anything good come out of Nazareth?"* Philip's answer was, *"Come and see."* Each person, sooner or later, must hear and see Jesus for Himself. After seeing a minor miracle, Nathanael declares to Jesus, *"Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel."* (John 1:43-49)

The path to faith is a path that keeps leading us forward. The destination is not found in one single spot or moment. Note Jesus' words to Nathanael: *"Because I said to you, 'I saw you under the fig tree,' do you believe? You will see greater things than these."* (John 1:50).

Great and wonderful things are ahead if we are willing to follow the path to faith. Remember that, when we follow a new path, we usually can't see the destination. We must, however, be sure we trust what we are following. (John 1:51).

Lasciviousness

The Bible has many passages that condemn the sin of lasciviousness. It is mentioned as an evil to which men surrender who are darkened in their understanding and alienated from God. They are pictured as being past feeling and having given themselves up to this sin (Eph. 4:18,19). This is certainly an ugly picture of a depraved class of people.

Bible writers further tell us that the wicked men in the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were leading lascivious lives (2 Pet. 2:7). In Gal. 5:19-21, we find a number of sins cataloged as the *"works of the flesh,"* among which is the sin of lasciviousness. Then we are further told that *"they who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."* One does not

have to be guilty of all the sins mentioned in order to lose his inheritance, but just persist in any one of them.

What is lasciviousness? The word is translated from the Greek 'aselgeia' which Thayer, the noted Greek lexicographer, says is "wanton (acts or) manners, as filthy words, indecent bodily movements, unchaste handling of males and females." Webster defines it as "wanton; lewd; lustful; tending to produce voluptuous or lewd emotions."

The sin of lasciviousness can be committed in thought, word, and deed. Anything that is thought, spoken, or done that produces, or tends to produce lewd thoughts, lustful emotions, or wanton ideas is lascivious. It can be produced by objects, pictures, or persons. It can be induced in one person by another, the one guilty of producing it bearing responsibility with the one in whom the sin is incited.

At this point, we usually call attention to the indecent dress of the women as that which produces lasciviousness. And so it does, but this sin is not confined to the women. Men can be as guilty in these matters as the women. Men ought to be as careful in their dress as the women should be, and equally as careful of the way they talk and act. If one causes another to have an impure, unholy thought by the way that he is dressed, by the way that he talks or acts, he is guilty of lasciviousness. Not only has his conduct been improper, but he has led another to sin. Jesus said, *"it is impossible but that offences will come; but woe unto him through whom they come"* (Luke 17:1).

The sin of lasciviousness is the sin that is involved in dancing, mixed swimming, wearing shorts, telling suggestive jokes, speech that has a "double meaning," and the list goes on. It is no wonder that they who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven.

H. Osby Weaver; Taken from the Beacon Electronic Edition

The absurdity of moral relativism clearly demonstrated by five questions.

"There is no truth." *Is that true?*

"Truth about reality is unknowable." *Do you know that?*

"We should doubt everything." *Should I doubt that?*

"Opposites can both be true." *Is the opposite of that true?"*

“All truth comes from science.” *Does that truth come from science?*

by Brent Hunter

I LOVE THIS ANALOGY

When GOD wanted to create fish, He spoke to the sea.

When GOD wanted to create trees, He spoke to the earth.

But when GOD wanted to create man, He turned to Himself.

Note:

If you take a *fish* out of the *water* it will die; and when you remove a *tree* from the *soil*, it will also die.

Likewise, when *man* is disconnected from *God*, he dies. *God* is our natural environment. We were created to *live* in *His presence*. We have to be connected to *Him* because it is only in *Him* that life exists.

Let's stay connected to *God*. We recall that *water* without *fish* is still *water* but *fish* without *water* is nothing.

The *soil* without *tree* is still *soil* but the *tree* without *soil* is nothing.

God without *man* is still *God*, but *man* without *God* is nothing. Think about it!

Author unknown

NEWS AND NOTES

Sick in need of prayers:

JAN PATRICK, ALMA BAUMGARTNER, TRUDY MULLEN, RENE RATLIFFE, DENESE GORING, RODNEY BLOUNT, BROOKLYN BOYER, PAT GAINES HAS BACK SURGERY SCHEDULED FOR 12/18/20. TRACY RICHARDSON HAD SURGERY 11/19/20. THERE WILL BE AN ADDITIONAL SURGERY SCHEDULED TO COMPLETE THE REMOVAL OF TUMOROUS TISSUE.

SUNDAY BIBLE CLASS - EVIDENCES - BILL MILLER

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

SUNDAY SERMON: TBA

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:

facebook.com/LenexaChurchofChrist

lenexachurchofchrist.org

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)