

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”

April 16, 2023

“HIS EYE IS ON THE SPARROW”

by Jim Stauffer

“Are not two sparrows sold for a cent? And yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So do not fear; you are more valuable than many sparrows. (Matthew 10:29–31)

We just recently finished a gospel meeting at Lenexa. The lessons took us all the way from creation to our own resurrection as Christ promised in **John 5:28,29**. It was so encouraging to focus our attention on the great love God, our Creator, had for mankind by placing him in a paradise in Eden to redeeming him at the cost of the life of His beloved Son. All this so we could spend eternity in His presence in another paradise when this life on earth is over.

It brings to our attention our need to be faithful to Him at all costs while we live here so we can be with Him there. The Christians of the first century faced the terrifying power of Caesar when Domitian reigned late in the century. He demanded to be worshiped as God and to those who rejected the “Mark of the Beast”, he reserved the right to persecute them socially, economically and yes even physically, leading Christ to promise this to those who would be faithful in the face of this enormous pressure. *‘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)*

Many of the saints succumbed to the physical torture and even death rather than confess Caesar as god. Paul gives quite a dissertation on the difficulties of the battle man faces to choose between the flesh and the

spirit (**Romans 7:14-25**). He encourages us to walk by the spirit and not by the flesh (**Gal. 5:16,17**).

We face a more subtle approach by Satan. He only asks us to tone down our proclamation and defense of truth. Simply blend into the society around us. No need to speak up or be visible in our objection to sin. You see, our government makes a different demand for homage than actual spoken worship. Just accept the things we set forth and continue to quietly worship the Lord.

What we must grasp is the teaching God provides and just what is involved in obedience. When Stephen was called upon to defend his belief in Jesus of Nazareth, he did not “pull punches”. He explained to the Council the history of Israel in disobeying God by persecuting and killing His prophets who spoke of the coming Messiah. And topping it off by killing Jesus Who was the Righteous One (**Acts 7:51-53**). This resulted in his death at which time he prayed for their forgiveness as Christ had also done from the cross.

Are we able to understand the level of devotion it requires to ask the God Who is being denied and disobeyed to forgive those who are in the act of rebellion? Does this help us understand the process that occurs in the heart of man we he is no longer conformed to this world but is transformed by the renewing of his mind? (**Romans 12:1,2**).

Are we sufficiently strengthened by the Spirit of God and Christ that dwells in the one who is in Christ Jesus to maintain our focus on things above rather than on things of the earth (**Romans 8:9-11; Col. 3:1-4**).

We are, after all, the very special part of His creation for whom Jesus died. We are the very special part of His creation who have the hope of the eternal *..inheritance, imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you...* (1 Peter 1:4). Now if we believe His word and trust His promises, we will live like people who have that hope and attempt to lead others there as well.

2 Corinthians 5:1-8

“For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For indeed in this house we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven, inasmuch as we, having put it on, will not be found naked. For indeed while we are in this tent, we groan, being burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed but to be clothed, so that what is mortal will be swallowed up by life. Now He who prepared us for this very purpose is God, who gave to us the Spirit as a pledge. Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord--for we walk by faith, not by sight--we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.”

Her father died in her infancy. When she was four years old, she was left paralyzed following a spinal infection that rendered her an invalid. She lived her life in a wheelchair. And suffered the uncertain ravages of the Civil War. But Jennie Bain Wilson lived a productive and joyful life as she grew up in rural Indiana.

In 1881, at age 25 she was carried into a creek in her wheelchair and baptized into Christ. She wrote, “It gave me much joy to thus confess my dear Savior.” Jennie’s life was then dedicated to her love of music and poetry. She penned over 2200 poems. One of the most famous set to music and found into many hymnals is “Hold To God’s Unchanging Hand.”

The first verses offers this insight and exhortation

Time is filled with swift transition,
Naught of earth unmoved can stand,
Build your hopes on things eternal,
Hold to God’s unchanging hand

In today’s text, Paul is essentially admonishing us in a similar vein. He speaks as one who has suffered hardship, endured trials, and experienced adversity, yet he provides a hopeful assurance of the Christian’s

future.

Note these declarative affirmations.

We know.

There’s a lot we don’t know. But through God’s Word we know everything we need to know to live an abundant life. We can know God. Know Jesus. Know the revelation of the Holy Spirit. Know that His promises are steadfast and sure. Like Paul, we know.

We have.

Paul was a tentmaker. So, he compared this body to a tent. Something temporary. Weak. And lacking beauty. But, there’s something we have. *“A building from God.”* A heavenly house. A glorified body. One that is permanent. Glorious. And immortal. Interestingly, he spoke of it like he was already in possession of it. And in his mind, he was.

We groan.

No doubt the debilitating condition Jennie Wilson suffered led to a great deal of groaning. There’s no question, Paul suffered physically, mentally and emotionally. He was beaten. Stoned. Imprisoned. Imperiled. Misrepresented. Misunderstood. And weary from his work for the Lord.

The problems, perplexities and predicaments of our earthly existence produce either an audible groan or an inner sigh. And we all know the feeling when we suffer pain, experience loss, feel heartache and walk in the shadow of death.

We walk.

Yet, through it all, Paul said, “we walk by faith and not by sight.” As Paul wrote earlier our focus is not on what we see, but what we don’t see with the naked eye. What we literally see is temporal and transitory. But what we see through the eye of faith is spiritual and eternal (2 Cor 4:16-18).

Thus, we walk in the light of God’s Word.. We walk in the footsteps of Jesus. We walk in love. We walk according to our Christian calling. We walk in wisdom. And we walk not as pagan people in the lusts of their flesh. We walk according to His commandments. We walk in the Spirit.

We’re confident.

The result of this approach to life is confidence. Assurance. Trust. And courage. Twice in the text Paul expresses the confidence of his eternal future. We too, can take heart in this hope, and not lose heart regardless of life’s troubles, trials and temptations to quit.

So, we share and sing with Jennie Wilson the sentiments of her song:

Trust in Him who will not leave you.
Whatsoever years may bring.

If by earthly friends forsaken,
Still more closely to Him cling.
Covet not this world's vain riches
That so rapidly decay.
Seek to gain the heav'nly treasures.
They will never pass away.
When your journey is completed,
If to God you have been true,
Fair and bright the home in Glory
Your enraptured soul will view.
Hold to His hand, to God's unchanging hand.
Hold to His hand, to God's unchanging hand.
Build your hopes on things eternal.
Hold to God's unchanging hand.
—Ken Weliever, *The Preacher man*

The Resurrection of the Dead

In describing the unity of the Spirit we are called to have, one of the things said is, *“There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling” (Eph. 4:4)*. What is that one hope that all believers share? As Paul defended himself he would state, *“I have hope in God, which they themselves also accept, that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust” (Acts 24:15)*. The resurrection of the dead, not the afterlife, but the resurrection of the dead has always been a lightning rod for mockery and disbelief. The more things change, the more they stay the same.

➤ **Within the Gentiles** there was a belief in the afterlife. The Egyptians obviously believed in the afterlife, based on the pyramids themselves and the treasures within. Afterward, the Greeks and Romans had their river Styx, their Mercury or Hermes, their underworlds, their Elysium, and other ideas. But when Paul preached the resurrection of the dead to the Athenians, who believed in the afterlife, they mocked (**Acts 17:32**). It was not the afterlife they mocked. It was the resurrection they denied.

➤ **Within Judaism** the Sadducees denied the resurrection (**Acts 23:8**). Many have speculated as to how they could come to such disbelief. They claimed to follow the law, rejecting the Pharisees traditions, but if they truly followed the law they would believe in the resurrection. Abraham had concluded this very thing (**Heb. 11:19**). The division on this topic was pronounced enough within Israel that non-inspired writers mention it.

➤ **Today there are** those who deny the resurrection of the dead. In denominationalism, Jehovah's Witnesses deny it. Modernists deny it. In the

church, those who hold to the A.D. 70 doctrine or preterism deny it. Many are like the pagans of old. They may not deny the afterlife, but as far as *...all who are in the graves coming forth, those who have done good to the resurrection of life and those who have done evil to the resurrection of condemnation ... (Jn. 5:28,29)*? That they deny.

As stated, the more things change the more they stay the same. It should not move us away from our hope. *“We who are in this tent groan... not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life (2 Cor. 5:4)*. “If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit (**Rom. 8:11**). That is our hope.
25th Street Bulletin

“Secret Service” Evangelism?

Josh McKibben

I once heard about a preacher who delivered a sermon on fighting the good fight and being in the Lord's army. One of the members who was rarely involved and rarely attended was on the way out the door. The preacher asked, “Brother, are you strong in the Lord's army?” The man replied, “Certainly.” The preacher asked, “Then why do I hardly see you?” The man looked both ways, leaned in to the preacher's ear, and whispered, “I'm in the Secret Service.”

We chuckle at that story, but I'm afraid I've been guilty of treating evangelism like a Secret Service. Too many times I've told myself that “I don't necessarily need to talk to people about the Lord—just as long as I quietly live the Christian life, others will see my good example and want to become Christians too!”

Please don't misunderstand, setting a good example and having a good influence are extremely important in our efforts to win souls to Christ (See **Matt 5:13-16**). But there comes a time when I must open up my mouth and actually SAY SOMETHING. My job as a Christian is to “proclaim” and “confess” Jesus Christ to others (**1 Pet. 2:9; Matt. 10:32**).

I need to remember that my example alone is not evangelism. My example is merely the reason people may listen to me when I do speak to them about Christ.

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.

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

Evangelist and Editor Jim Stauffer

OUR ADDRESS IS:

7845 Cottonwood Dr.
Lenexa, Kansas 66216
913-620-0563

Check out the following websites

facebook.com/LenexaChurchofChrist

lenexachurchofchrist.org

Elders:

Ron Peck
Jim Stauffer

Deacons:

Bill Miller
Troy Armstrong

NEWS AND NOTES:

THOSE IN NEED OF PRAYERS:

ALMA BAUMGARTNER, DENESE GORING, BROOKLYN BOYER, TRACY RICHARDSON, MATT BASSFORD, WAYNE MOODY, DAVID AND JOANNE BECKLEY, MARK WALKER, PAT MFCLOUD, JAN PATRICK IS AT NOTTINGHAM IN OLATHE. JORDAN SHOUSE.

FREDA WALKER PASSED AWAY WEDNESDAY. REMEMBER HER FAMILY IN PRAYER.

Bible Classes: Sunday Morning
Prayer - Ron Peck

Wednesday Evening - **Minor Prophets** - Jim Stauffer

Sunday Sermon: **Of What Do You Consist?**



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