

Romans 14:19 - ...Let us pursue the things which make for peace & the things by which one may edify another

THE LENEXA EDIFIER

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Meeting Times:

Sunday Bible Classes	9:30 am
Sunday Morning Worship	10:20 am
Sunday Evening Worship	5:00 pm
Wednesday Bible Classes	7:00 pm

Obedience vs. Grace

by *Jim Stauffer*

When in the history of man has God extended His grace to deliver without the requirement of obedience? The Hebrew writer sets forth the principle clearly in **Heb. 5:8,9** with Jesus as the central figure. *Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. 9 And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him.*

Adam and Eve were placed in the Garden of Eden, a paradise on earth with responsibilities, yes, laws they were to obey. **Gen. 2:15-17** *The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. 16 And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, 17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."* When they violated those laws, they died spiritually (**Isa. 59:1,2**), and were expelled from the Garden and denied access to the Tree of Life and later died physically as a result.

God chose a people, Israel, and delivered them from slavery in Egypt. He established a set of laws to govern the covenant between the people and Himself. He told them they must obey those laws or He would destroy them from off the earth. (**Deut. 6:10-15; 7:9,10**) They failed

to keep the laws given at Sinai and God kept His word to destroy them. (**2 Kgs 17:18**)

Jesus said there would be those both in His days on the earth as well as in future times who would claim to do works in His name. He differentiated between saying and actually doing it, obedience. **Matt. 7:21-23** *"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22 On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' 23 And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'*

The Apostolic writers then make clear to all who would be party to the covenant Jesus initiated with His death on the cross (**Heb. 8:8-12; 9:15-17**), obedience is a pre-requisite to receiving the grace by which we are to be saved. (**Heb. 5:8,9; Eph. 2:8,9**)

Since nearly all claim to follow the Bible, who are we listening to; God or what men represent God to say?

Remember those famous words, *"This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, Hear ye Him. (Mat. 17:5)*

"ARGUING" THE SCRIPTURES

L.A Stauffer

There is nothing wrong with arguing, but that does not justify a mean-spirited disposition.

A common rule in modern society is that people must not "argue" about politics or religion. And that grows out of, in part, the connotation of the word "argue" today. "Argue" means, to most people, an "angry dispute or disagreement." The word, however, at one time simply meant to "reason" or "prove" or "assert" a point. Nothing in the word implies "anger" or "shouting," as might characterize some arguments.

The apostle Paul, for example, often entered the synagogues of the Jews where he knew he would encounter men who denied that Jesus is the Messiah. The Bible says that he "reasoned" with them (**Acts 17:2**). Greek lexicons define the word "reasoned" (dialegomai): "discuss," "converse," "argue." Paul set forth reasons from the scriptures why he believed Jesus was the Messiah. He also reasoned with Felix, an immoral governor of Rome, about "righteousness," "self-control," and "judgment to come" (**Acts 24:25**). Paul did this because truth is essential to salvation and because the Lord commanded that truth be preached to every person (**see Jno. 8:31,32; Matt. 28:18-20**).

We, of course, have no guarantee that "reasoning" with people from the scriptures will not evoke anger--even to the point of losing friends. This happened to Paul at Thessalonica. After he discussed the matter of Jesus as the Christ, they stirred up persecution, assaulted some who believed Paul's message, and drove Paul himself from the city (**Acts 17:1-10**). Paul got so graphic with Felix in his reasoning that the governor was terrified by the message of the gospel concerning judgment. Whether Felix was offended or whether he ever received the gospel is beside the point. He needed to hear it, and so do our friends.

When Apollos, an educated and eloquent preacher, came to Ephesus, he used his knowledge of the scriptures to "powerfully

confute," meaning to refute, the Jewish view of Jesus (**Acts 18: 24,28**). Since the only way to God is through Jesus (**Jno. 14:6**), this young preacher fervently reasoned and discussed and argued with the Jews who needed truth. Paul asked brethren to pray for him that he might open his mouth and speak boldly the gospel in his trial before the emperor of Rome (**Eph. 6:18-20**). His concern was not about a "personal" defense but the courage to discuss with his judge the scriptures.

Yes, I know we live at a time when it is not "polite" to differ with people religiously, especially when you have to openly show them that they are in error. A person who believes he can be saved by infant baptism, by sprinkling rather than immersion, or by faith only in the absence of baptism is wrong--not because I say so, but because the scriptures so teach. He may never know he is in error if we maintain this modern idea that it is wrong to "discuss" or "reason" with people from the scriptures. We must not shrink back from teaching and declaring the whole counsel of God to all men as revealed in the Bible (**see Acts 20:27**).

But let us also remember that there is nothing wrong with being kind and gentle. In early restoration days preachers were largely of rural backgrounds and congregations were located predominantly in small farming communities. Both preachers and debaters were rugged individuals who were plain spoken. Audiences and congregations were of the same mold. Many of the remarks, put-downs, and charges were rough and would be highly insulting to a modern assembly of people.

As preachers, the question we have to ask ourselves is: "Do we have to repeat the crude remarks of an earlier century of preachers to be sound?" The question is not must we preach the same truth these men preached and whether we should speak with clarity of understanding. All men need the truth and it must be declared plainly, boldly, and fully (**see 2 Cor. 3:12; Acts 20:27**).

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John the Baptist was a prophet of God, and the Spirit, who knows the hearts of men and their hardness, directed him to lash out at stubborn Jews with words like -- "Ye offspring of vipers" (**Lk. 3:7**). Must I use those words to be faithful to God? Jesus - God in the flesh - said to that same generation: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites" (**Matt. 23**). I've never said that to an audience, and don't believe I can. Does this make me unsound?

The Lord's servants must avoid strife, Paul says, and "be gentle towards all, apt to teach, forbearing, in meekness correcting them that oppose themselves" (**2 Tim. 2:24,25**). Will this make a preacher soft, yielding, and compromising? Is it wrong to nurture brethren as a nurse who cherisheth her own children (**1 Thes. 2:7**)? Both disposition of heart and content of message, brethren, are the measure of soundness and faithfulness. Let us then speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth frankly -- even argue it, but -- in LOVE and with LONGSUFFERING! (**Eph. 4:15; 2 Tim. 4:2**).

Another Gap

Dan S. Shipley

Much is being spoken and written about gaps -- the credibility gap, the generation gap, the communications gap, etc. Something needs to be said about the identity gap too; that gap that often exists between what something is and what it is called.

Nowadays, the true nature of a thing cannot always be determined by what it is called. And worse, the name by which a thing is designated may actually mislead and deceive as to its true nature and identity. For instance, under the name disguise pornography is being peddled as art, anarchy is termed freedom of expression and immorality is being called the new morality. What gaping gaps!

Names are not without influence. Since the beginning, Satan and his servants have sought to minimize the offensiveness of wrong with pleasant language. Sinners seldom call their sins what they are, preferring to call bad things by good names -- and many never see the gap -- or the sin. Through Isaiah, God pronounces a woe upon those who would call evil good, and good evil (**Isa. 5:20**). Wrong cannot

become right under an alias and evil cannot find dignity under a respectable name. We must take care not to allow ourselves or our youth to be led astray by evil in the wrappings of fair speech. As the name-game continues, so does its influence -- and so should the Christians awareness of it.

Even the respected field of education has contributed to these identity gap problems. Young Christians have been disillusioned by the many theories of evolution that have been advanced under the respectable banner of science. I once sat in a college classroom where many false claims of Roman Catholicism were set forth as historical facts -- and they called it European History. Other students may hear that children are not to be disciplined and that immoral conduct is not always so bad -- under the guise of psychology. And to think that we call such faith-robbing experiences education. Thankfully though, such is not true of all schools, but even so, Christians should remain alert.

The identity gap presents problems in other areas with which we should be concerned too. Immodest dress, for instance, was not so much of a problem for some ladies until they called it fashion. Long ago we learned that feelings, philosophies and opinions are often identified as faith; that stubbornness may be called conviction and that desire is apt to be called hope. Bad men are wrongly called good men and following men is often called following Christ. We must remember too that faithfulness is more than good attendance; that soundness is more than being called anti; that repentance is more than coming forward and that worship is more than just a gathering in a church building.

Accordingly, we would all profit in remembering the prevalence and deceitfulness of such gaps; in recognizing and identifying a thing for what it is; in saying what we mean and in being what we claim. May we call Christ Lord and self Christian -- without the gap.

OUR BRETHREN IN THE PHILIPPINES

We encourage all brethren to "remember the poor" as well as scriptural examples of benevolence in times such as this. **Acts 11:27-30; 1 Cor. 16; 2 Cor. 8&9.**

News & Notes

by Jim Stauffer

Eph. 2:19-21 “So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone; in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord.”

1 Pet. 2:9 “But ye are an elect race, royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:”

Psalms 1:1-6 “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 the scoffers; but his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by

streams of water, that bringeth forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also doth not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. The wicked are not so, but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; but the way of the wicked shall perish.”

Let us remember the instruction of our Lord by visiting in whatever way we can, **Jan Patrick, Alma Baumgartner, Candiss Cason, Pat Blackstock,** and **Terry Czirr.**

Matt. 25:40 “And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me.”

The Church at Lenexa is a congregation of brethren who have been “*justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus*” (**Romans 3:24**).

As a result of this justification we have been “*delivered out of darkness and translated into the kingdom of the Son of his love, in whom we have our redemption, the forgiveness of sins*” (**Colossians 1:13-14**).

We therefore respect the inspired Word of God that will

completely furnish us unto every good work by speaking only as the oracles of God (**2 Timothy 3:16-17; 1 Peter 4:11**).

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WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?

- **HEAR** the gospel, **Romans 10:17**
- **BELIEVE** in Jesus Christ, **Hebrews 11:6**
- **REPENT** of sin, **Acts 17:30**
- **CONFESS** Christ as Lord, **Romans 10:9-10**
- **BE BAPTIZED** for the remission of sins, **Acts 2:38**

