

Rom. 14:19 So then let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another.

John 8:32 and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

THE LENEXA EDIFIER

February

8

2015

CHURCH DISCIPLINE; NOW AND ALWAYS

Jim Stauffer

Any organization that runs efficiently must have guidance and direction. Anytime the pattern of operation is disturbed by one of its members or employees the efficiency of the organization's progress toward its goal is negatively affected.

The church according to instruction from God our Father by way of the Holy Spirit faces similar problems from time to time and appropriate discipline is necessary to restore progress to its normal levels.

Reasons for discipline in any effort are quite constant. Paul explains the discipline needed by a child of God through an analogy with athletics. The athlete exercises discipline to his body to prepare it for the greatest efficiency in competition. He then states one must do the same to achieve success in the spiritual race or battle. **1 Cor. 9:27** *but I buffet my body, and bring it into bondage: lest by any means, after that I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected.*

We are children of God and very pleased to be so. **(1 John 3:1)** The Hebrew writer tells us the value of discipline brought by the Father to His sons. **Heb. 12:7** *It is for chastening that ye endure; God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father chasteneth not? 8 But if ye are without chastening, whereof all have been made partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. 11 All chastening seemeth for the present to be not joyous but grievous; yet afterward it yieldeth peaceable fruit unto them that have been exercised thereby, even the fruit of righteousness.*

It is due to such instruction on the value of discipline that the church in keeping with the commandments of the Lord must practice it with its members. As stated above when discipline fails, the efficiency of any organization toward its goal begins to fail. This is as true of the church today as it was in the day of the New Testament when the following warnings were given.

1 COR. 5:3-5 *For I verily, being absent in body but present in spirit, have already as though I were present judged him that hath so wrought this thing, 4 in the name of our Lord Jesus, ye being gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus, 5 to deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.*

Paul issues this direction to the church at Corinth to prevent a little influence from spreading through the whole church. **(vs7)** His point is simple and clear. By ignoring sin in the church we grant implicit approval of the sin. When we do that we silently encourage others to pursue the same sin, or at the very least to be less offended by it. Jesus died to purchase the church with His own blood and present it as a glorious church without spot or blemish. **(Acts 20:28; Eph. 5:27)** It becomes our role as caretakers of the local congregation of saints to teach and preserve that purity.

2 THESS. 3:6,7 *Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which they received of us. 7 For yourselves know how ye ought to imitate us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you;* While the sin in this case was different, Paul said it was perpetrated by those who were walking disorderly. We learn by reading further they were not working as they should to provide for themselves and were becoming busybodies. The Greek word rendered in the English as disorderly means to walk out of step or order as a soldier out of rank. They were out of line with the conduct and responsibilities of a child of God and were adversely affecting the function and overall good of the church.

ROM. 16:17,18 *Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them that are causing the divisions and occasions of stumbling, contrary to the doctrine which ye learned: and turn away from them. 18 For they that are such serve not our Lord Christ, but their own belly; and by their smooth and fair speech they beguile the hearts of the innocent.* Discipline is needed here to prevent divisions and occasions for stumbling. These men are described as those who serve themselves rather than others and the cause of Christ. Paul describes similar attitudes to the Philippians. **Phil. 3:18** *For many walk, of whom I told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: 19 whose end is perdition, whose god is the belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.* The selfish, fleshly attitude of these people cannot be tolerated in the church as it will create divisions and

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lead others to sin as Paul indicates.

The clear mandate for the local church is to recognize sin in the camp. Once it is recognized it must be corrected. The gospel itself is a message of correction, instruction and rebuke. **(2 Tim. 3:16,17; 4:1-3)** We must protect the purity of the church Jesus died for. It is imperative we hold each other accountable to walk and conduct ourselves in an *orderly* fashion guided by scripture. We cannot tolerate those who place themselves above the rest and teach things that please them rather than the simplicity of the gospel. These responsibilities demand we implement the discipline we have just observed in the churches in New Testament days. As Paul tells the Thessalonians, our goal is two fold. We protect the local church and try to save the soul of the sinner. **2 Th. 3:15** *And yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.*

It must be understood that men walk disorderly and sin when they fail to mind the things of the spirit and walk according to the flesh. **(Rom. 8:5; Gal. 5:16)** There are many instances where we are warned about similar situations to these we have discussed. While this list is not exhaustive we encourage further study on your part of the following passages as well. **(Mat. 7:15; Acts 15:1-5; 1 Cor. 1:10-13; Gal. 1:6-9; Col. 2:8)**

LOST!

This word has many different meanings to many different people.

To a parent, a lost child is a horrible situation.

A lost wallet causes many actions to be taken.

In describing the death of a loved one it is said they "lost someone dear to them".

Some people traveling get lost.

Then, some people have lost their minds as we say in a metaphorical way.

But the worst loss for anyone is being spiritually lost.

People get lost all the time, and many are lost spiritually. Many know they are lost spiritually, but do not care to do anything about it.

But let us suppose they realize their lost condition, how do they find their way.

The first step is acknowledgement that they are lost. For why would they do anything if they did not know they were lost.

Second step is trying to figure out where you want to go. If you have no place to go, then perhaps you are not lost as we reason in our human minds.

Now for the spiritually lost, they realize that being lost is the same as being separated from God. What caused this? Their sins. **Isaiah 59:2** tells us that our sins separate us from God. What can we do to find God once again? The answer is easy. Let God give you the directions. Call it God's GPS. Most of us know how a GPS works. We have them in our cars and telephones and computers. These contraptions are pretty smart.

They not only can direct you to your desired destination, but they tell you how to get there, and which roads to take. Some are even sophisticated enough to warn you of traffic ahead, and seek a possible safe detour. But

what good would this GPS device be if we did not follow it's instructions? Suppose you make a left turn when the GPS tells you to make a right turn. That delays your getting to your destination.

You see, God's Plan of Salvation (GPS) informs us what road to take and how to stay on it. The directions are given to us via the instruction manual, better known as the Bible. When one follows the guidance of the GPS and adheres to the rules, they will get to the desired destination of Heaven. But if they choose to go off course (because the Bible will never lead them that direction), they must either return to the right course, or be lost.

Here on earth if one is lost, they have many sources to turn to. They can ask for directions, or look up the directions. They can read a map, or make a phone call to get directions. And usually they find what they need in a short time. Many times, it does not bother us that much to know that we are lost. We know we need to get back on the right course, and we just need to find out as soon as possible, or we need to seek an alternative route to get to our destination.

But there is only one way to get to Heaven and that means going on the right route which takes us through Jesus Christ. Jesus is the way the truth and the life, no one comes to the Father except through Him. (John 14:6) If we choose to travel a different path, or follow different rules from what God has already given to us, we will become lost.

Make sure you follow God's GPS on your spiritual journey, and the desired destination will be there for you to enjoy. But take warning if you choose a different path.

By Carey Scott

No One Stood With Me

In the final writings of the apostle Paul, a plea is made to his young "son in the faith," Timothy, to come quickly to him and before winter. Second Timothy 4 is a personal and passionate letter of hope preserved for all time, speaking words of expectation from the life of Paul. He speaks of his pending death in terms of victory, not defeat. He seeks to set various parts of his life in order such as bidding Timothy to come quickly and bring Mark, along with his cloak he left with Carpus at Troas. He also solicits Timothy to bring his books and especially the parchments.

In these moments of reflection, Paul is reminded of what Alexander the coppersmith did to him and he allows God to take charge of that matter. Sadly, Paul recounts when he presented his *first defense no one stood with me, but all forsook me.* **(4:16)** How difficult those thoughts came to Paul as rehearsed the events that led to his imprisonment and pending death. When he stood to make his defense before men, he had not a friend who would stand with him. He stood alone in the court of world opinion and only his words would be heard.

Paul knew anyone who would stand next to him would be found in the same place as he now found

himself. No one had the courage to face the trial he faced or the consequence of his preaching. He was abandoned, forsaken and left to defend his own name. It saddened his heart greatly for lack of a human hand to hold firmly to or a soothing voice of comfort to give trust in. He could have recalled the wonderful times in Philippi when, thrown into the inner prison and his feet fastened in stocks, he and Silas prayed together and sang hymns to God - together.

At his first defense there was no one there as all had deserted him. But he knew that the lives of those who deserted them were still being impacted by the gospel of Jesus Christ. Paul was an older man of greater wisdom and understanding of the human spirit. He knew of those who deserted him of their weaknesses and their needs before God. He does not hold a spirit of vengeance against them but in humility pleads for the Lord's blessing upon them. *May it not be charged against them.* (4:16)

The scene of Paul is a mirror of so many who have found themselves suffering for Christ and suffering alone. The example of Jesus is set forth for those who desire to follow after Him and bear their cross. Jesus said in **John 16:32**, *Indeed the hour is coming, yes, has now come, that you will be scattered, each to his own, and will leave Me alone. And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me.* Like his Lord, Paul knew that when no one would stand up for him, God was always there. He writes, *But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that the message might be preached fully through me, and that all the Gentiles might hear. And I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve me for His heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory forever and ever. Amen!* (4:17,18)

In our daily struggles we can be forsaken by all men and no one will stand with us. We can find ourselves as the only person in the world who is seeking to do what is right. Our reward does not come from the presence of our friends but from the presence of our God. Many times we forsake others when we should be stronger. As Paul prayed for those who left him, we too must grow in strength and courage to face the difficulties of life. Remember how important we are to one another and how we need to stand with others for the cause of Christ. When all is said and done, may we remember the words of our God: *I will never leave you nor forsake you. So we may boldly say: The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?* (Hebrews 13:5,6)

By Kent E. Heaton Sr.

SALT
Randy Harshbarger

On my last trip to Ethiopia, salt vendors (those who sell salt in the markets, on the streets, etc) experienced a major trauma when salt traders (the middlemen) raised the price of salt to greatly inflated prices. A kilogram of salt that sold for one birr (Ethiopian currency; about 10

cents), now sold for ten birr (or, one dollar). The effect was felt throughout Ethiopia; the larger cities were hit the hardest. The government quickly stepped in and forced salt prices back to fair market values.

Regardless of the country, the need for salt is understood. In Ethiopia, salt is used in coffee (yes, coffee), in preparing kitfo (a meat dish, sometimes served raw), and wat (a general term for many dishes). Importantly, salt is used to make *injera*, a pancake-like bread that is made from teff (wheat). Injera is the staple of life for Ethiopians, comprising 2/3rds of their daily diet. From a nutritional standpoint, injera has a high iron content; this helps prevent anemia. The poor, as always, suffered the most from the rise in salt prices.

Religion is an inextricable part of Ethiopian society and dictates nutritional habits. Ethiopian Orthodox do not eat meat, eggs or dairy products on Wednesdays and Fridays. They observe a number of fasts; the longest is the Easter fast or “Kudade Tsom” which lasts 55 days. Salt is needed to prepare the foods they *can* eat. Even if we cannot appreciate the “religious nature” of salt as it pertains to the Eastern Orthodox religion, we can appreciate salt’s pragmatic value.

Jesus said: *You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men* (Matthew 5:13). The world is the sphere of influence for the Christian. Unquestionably, the influence of Christians has made a difference for good wherever that influence may be. The world may lose its savor; the savor of the faithful Christian can ignite a revival for good.

If we lose our savor—our saltiness—our influence for good, what happens? Our own spiritual lives are hindered. We become ineffective in helping others, whether our loved ones, neighbors, or anyone who might be watching us. When we lose our saltiness, we are fit only for the garbage heap. Because of our actions others may blaspheme the name of God rather than glorify the name of God (1 Timothy 6:1).

Our challenge to be salt is greater than ever before. Our morally decadent culture, with its ever-changing values, needs the influence of every Christian. The opportunities are around us— school, work, play, in the family circle. Is it perverting the message of this brief article to say: We need to make sure we do not inflate the true value of salt? We do not want to make salt scarce; we want salt to be everywhere.

There'll be no terror attacks in heaven
Its capital will never be shook
But we'll dwell in that New Jerusalem
As described in the 66th Book
by Grant Clothier

Rev. 21:10 *And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, 11 having the glory of God: her light was like unto a stone most precious, as it were a jasper stone, clear as crystal:*

Eph. 2:19 *So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, 20 being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone; 21 in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord;*

1Pet. 2:9 *But ye are an elect race, a 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:*

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

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NEWS AND NOTES:

PLEASE REMEMBER THE FOLLOWING IN YOUR PRAYERS: J.R. DANIEL, PAT AND GRANT CLOTHIER, MARY CZIRR, AND JAN PATRICK AND IRENE HURD. LORETTA TAPP IS TO RESUME CANCER TREATMENTS THIS MONTH.

OUR CURRENT STUDIES ARE: SUNDAY MORNING AND WEDNESDAY EVENING: EVIDENCES

SERMON SUNDAY AM: PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS



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