

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

March

15

2015

THE OPPORTUNITY WEALTH AFFORDS

Jim Stauffer

In Matthew 19 Jesus is approached by a rich young ruler who asks, *Teacher, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?* (vs 16) During their exchange he insisted he had kept the commandments. Jesus, with His ability to read the hearts of men, told him he must *sell that which thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come follow me.* (vs 21) The sad part of the story is the young man could not bring himself to comply with the request of the Lord and went away sorrowful.

This prompted Jesus' disciples to question who could be saved if the rich could not. As in most societies men assume the advantages go to the wealthy and powerful. Jesus said it is very difficult for the wealthy man to enter the kingdom. Obviously for the very reason this young man walked away. Because they love their riches so much they will not part with them. He did assure them that while it is very difficult for the wealthy to enter the kingdom, *with men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.* (vs 26)

It is extremely difficult for those of power to submit to the Lord as is necessary to inherit eternal life. (Mat. 16:24-26) This young man was much like those Paul refers to as, *wise after the flesh*, the mighty and noble who he indicates struggle to accept the simplicity of the gospel. (1 Cor. 1:26)

But, with God all things are possible. The gospel has the power to save anyone who will accept its message. (Rom. 1:16) The word of God is and always has been powerful. Just as the angel spoke to Mary to assure her concerning the miraculous birth of the Lord. *Luke 1:36 And behold, Elisabeth thy kinswoman, she also hath conceived a son in her old age; and this is the sixth month with her that was called barren. 37 For no word from God shall be void of power. 38 And Mary said, Behold, the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.*

Paul encourages Timothy to, *Charge them that are rich in this present world, that they be not highminded, nor have their hope set on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, that they be ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up*

in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on the life which is life indeed. (1 Tim. 6:17-19) He gives this charge to brethren he knows have sufficient wealth to be distracted from their spiritual goals. In doing so he acknowledges they have the capacity of heeding the instruction of the Lord concerning where our trust should be. *Matt. 6:19 Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust consume, and where thieves break through and steal:20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth consume, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:21 for where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be also.*

One of the things we are assured of is God will not allow us to be *tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation make also the way of escape, that ye may be able to endure it.* (1 Cor. 10:13) This promise is to the wealthy as surely as it is to the poor.

We must then learn the danger of wealth is not the possession of it but rather the desire for it. This is exactly what Paul was exposing in his *love is a root of all kinds of evil* message. Listen to the exact words. *1 Tim. 6:9 But they that are minded to be rich fall into a temptation and a snare and many foolish and hurtful lusts, such as drown men in destruction and perdition. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil: which some reaching after have been led astray from the faith, and have pierced themselves through with many sorrows.*

Paul writes a letter to such a man, Philemon. By all we can determine, Philemon was a man of assets likely more abundant than most. He was a slave owner. His slave, Onesimus had fled apparently with some things he deemed necessary for his sustenance, that belonged to Philemon. (vs 11,18) As Paul reports to Philemon of the conversion to Christ of Onesimus, he does so to a man he knows to have love for the Lord and brethren and a strong faith as well. (vs 4-6) It is in this light he sends Onesimus back to the slave owner to whom he was disloyal and dishonest.

In this letter, he encourages this wealthy saint to show mercy to the one who has wronged him that he might become a faithful brother in the service of the

continued on page 2

Lord. He has every confidence Philemon will do just that when Onesimus returns. **(vs 21)**

The clear tenor of the epistle recognizes the wealth and power Philemon possesses but also expresses complete confidence that spiritual considerations are of greater concern than material for Philemon, a trusted servant of the Lord.

A returning slave who had stolen from his master would usually have been punished severely, possibly even death. Paul expected much more of Philemon when a runaway slave returns as both a servant of the Lord and a brother in Christ.

With the power of God it is possible, yea even necessary that we as saints devote ourselves and our resources to those spiritual matters that Jesus referred to as *the good part*. **(Lk. 10:42)**

We are the richest nation per capita (the common man) on the earth. The gospel has a free flow in our land like no other. It is imperative we embrace both the opportunity and responsibility these facets combined, grant us.

BAPTISM AND GRACE

by L.A. Stauffer

The Old Testament tells the story of Naaman, an honorable man in the nation of Syria and captain of the army. But it also says that he was a leper. In one of his battles against Israel, Naaman had conquered a Jewish girl whom he had made a servant to his wife in their household. One day the Jewish maiden suggested to her mistress that if Naaman could be with the prophet in Israel, he would be healed of his leprosy. At the servant girl's suggestion Naaman came to see the prophet and was met by one of his messengers who told him to dip in the Jordan River seven times and he would be healed. Enraged by such a strange idea, the honorable captain rejected the command. Later he was persuaded by one of his own servants to obey the command. After dipping the seventh time in the Jordan River, Naaman was healed **(2 Kings 5:1-14)**.

Does anyone read this account and believe that Naaman merited or earned this gift of healing from God? Does anyone deny that the captain was healed by the gracious will and blessing of God? The goal of this event was to display God's power and convince Naaman *"that there is a prophet in Israel"* **(1 Kings 5:8)**. It was not to pay a debt or fulfill an obligation to Naaman for traveling from Syria to Israel and on to the Jordan to dip seven times. The prominent soldier was made whole by God's grace—contingent, of course, on obedient faith.

How could anyone read this story and believe that men who obey God to be baptized have earned the forgiveness of sins? Why would they not agree that a baptized believer, in the same way as Naaman, is saved by grace? Does God owe a man salvation because he walks to the front of an auditorium or even ten miles to a river to confess Christ and be baptized? It takes a rather unusual kind of reasoning to draw this conclusion. The sense in which the Bible speaks of salvation by works is that God owes it to man as a matter of debt if man keeps God's law perfectly. Otherwise, *"Cursed is*

everyone who continues not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them" **(see Rom 4:1-8; Gal 3:10-11)**.

But no man, other than Jesus, has lived perfectly under God's law. *"All have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God"* and His perfection **(Rom 3:23)**. This means that all men by works are under God's curse and, as Naaman, must come to God's prophet to receive cleansing. The prophet of God today is Jesus **(Heb 1:1-2; Acts 3:22-23)** and all who come to Him must believe and be baptized. Jesus Himself said: *"He that believes and is baptized shall be saved"* **(Mark 16:16)**.

The man who walks into the waters of baptism does exactly what Naaman did. First, he believes both the promise and command of God. Secondly, he submits to God's will and obeys him. This is what Paul in the epistle to the Romans called the *"obedience of faith."* He tells the recipients of this letter both at the beginning and end of the letter that the scriptures were revealed to bring the *"obedience of faith"* to all nations and that he was commissioned as an apostle to teach all nations the *"obedience of faith"* **(see Rom. 1:5; 16:26)**. When he proclaims in this letter the gospel as God's power *"unto salvation to everyone that believes"* **(Rom. 1:16)**, he has no intentions of eliminating obedience to baptism or of teaching the reformation theology of *"faith alone."* But someone might ask: what does being dipped in water have to do with forgiveness? And what, they could also ask, did dipping in the Jordan River seven times have to do with being healed of leprosy? The connection is that men manifest before God the *"obedience of faith"* when they keep His commandments. And men who by faith are baptized obey God's command and receive His promise of forgiveness **(see Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16)**. But beyond this, note that baptism puts believers into Christ: *"For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ"*—who Himself is the *"gift"* of God's grace **(Gal 3:26-27; Rom 5:15)**. And, secondly, those *"who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death"*—where His blood was shed **(Rom 6:3-4)**. When sinners by faith are baptized into Christ and into His death, they come to the cross—the ultimate expression of God's grace **(Eph 2:13-18)**. It is in Christ Jesus that sinners are redeemed and forgiven by the riches of God's grace through the blood of Jesus **(Eph 1:7)**.

Are You Ashamed?

"For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of the Father with the holy angels." **(Mark 8:38)**

The parallel passage of this scripture is **Luke 9:26** and says almost the same thing. This should be a sobering thought to many who wear the name of Christ. For too often, for various reasons, we demonstrate that we are ashamed of Christ and His gospel.

This shame is evidenced by the fact that we do not

share the gospel message with others we come in contact with. And unless you continue to remind others that you are a Christian, they will soon forget.

The words of Jesus above are hard words for a Christian to swallow. For in essence, Jesus is saying that if we are ashamed of Him or His teachings, we will not be able to enter heaven. This shame is synonymous to denial. Notice what Jesus said in **Matthew 10:33**: *"But whoever shall deny Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven"*

Clearly the scriptures teach that Christians can lose their salvation by denying, disowning and even being ashamed of Jesus. If you think about it, you can see the devil at work in this area. Because the devil has failed to get us to live wicked lives, or to cause harm to Christ, he chooses a method that is very subtle and we go along feeling good about ourselves, while at the same time, we are separated from God. It is sin to be ashamed of Christ.

Notice the times where Paul mentioned the word ashamed:

"I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek" (Romans 1:16). Neither should we be ashamed of the gospel. Yet how often do we promote the gospel to those who need it? Your actions speak louder than your words. If you have no shame in the gospel, why are you not sharing it?

"And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us" (Romans 5:5). The phrase "maketh not ashamed in the KJV is translated by other words in most other versions of the Bible and as we look at some of them we get the idea that the Holy Spirit wanted us to have about our concept of hope. Notice: *"does not disappoint"* (TEV, NIV, NASB, RSV) *"is no mockery"* (NEB) *"will never disappoint"* (CEV, EVD) *"we are able to hold our heads high no matter what happens"* (LB) *"is not deceptive"* (JB)

Then again we read: *"Therefore what benefit were you then deriving from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death" (Romans 6:21)* In this context, Paul was discussing their former lifestyle and the things they once did. So we SHOULD be ashamed of those things we have done in the past that hurt God, but we should never be ashamed of what God did for us.

"Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord...but I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day." (2 Timothy 1:8-12)

"according to my earnest expectation and hope, that I shall not be put to shame in anything, but that with all boldness, Christ shall even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death" (Philippians 1:20) If we have hope in the promise of God, and if we share His gospel message, we have no reason to be ashamed,

for we are trying to exalt Christ in all that we are and everything that we do. Yet when our actions indicate something different, there is need to be concerned. Here is a quote from an article I read recently. *"Dear reader, if you are ashamed of the Lord Jesus and His words among the wicked in your neighborhood, jobsite, family, friends, etc., He, in turn, will be ashamed of YOU. That is fact, even though you might go to "church" as people say in our day, and live a moral life."* (Dan Corner-Fighting the Good Fight Vol 8, #1 from the Evangelical Outreach group). As I think and contemplate this, I realize that he is right on the money.

Part of our "good fight" is to battle against being ashamed of Jesus and His gospel among the wicked, lost, deceivers, and all those in error. Even though we may suffer persecution or fear that we might suffer persecution, let us not forget that the battle hardest to fight is the one within our own selves.

We have a day coming whereby we will give an account of our actions and the books of God will judge us. *"And let the one who is taught the word share all good things with him who teaches. Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh shall from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit shall from the Spirit reap eternal life. And let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we shall reap if we do not grow weary."* (Galatians 6:6-9)

By Carey Scott

THE PURPOSE OF OBEDIENCE

God is fitting and preparing us for eternal habitation with Him. In heaven God's will must reign supreme, otherwise confusion and disorder will prevail. In heaven they serve Him. (Rev. 7:15; 22:3) Joyful, loving obedience will be there, but it must be learned here. Here we form our characters. God is seeking in his preparatory school to train us in the art of obedience. *Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth.* (Mat. 6:10) No man can sincerely make that petition to God unless he is willing for God's will to reign supreme in his own heart. No one in heaven will urge that some of God's commandments are non-essential. Such characters will not be there.

Sound Doctrine, Vol. 1, page 127, C.R. Nichol, R.L. Whiteside

And so we see in the case of Philemon and Onesimus, slave owner and slave and Naaman, a powerful military man, we must all learn the lessons of obedience. These come when we truly revere and respect the Lord whom we serve and from whom they come. We cannot be ashamed of Him and the message He has sent. It is, after all, the solution to the problems we have here and is also the training we need for the eternity we hope to spend there.

John 3:16 *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life.*

Jim Stauffer

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

Evangelist and Editor Jim Stauffer

OUR ADDRESS IS:

7845 Cottonwood Dr.

Lenexa, Kansas 66216

913-764-9170

Check out the following websites

thelenexaedifier.com

facebook.com/LenexaChurchofChrist/

lenexachurchofchrist.org

NEWS AND NOTES:

PLEASE REMEMBER THE FOLLOWING
IN YOUR PRAYERS: J.R. DANIEL,
MARY CZIRR, IRENE HURD AND JAN
PATRICK. GRANT CLOTHIER IS IN
OVERLAND PARK NURSING AND
REHAB CENTER.

JESSIE GIBSON IS IN HOEGER
HOUSE FOR REHAB AFTER SURGERY.

OUR CURRENT STUDIES ARE: SUNDAY
MORNING: THE GOSPEL OF JOHN
WEDNESDAY EVENING:
PREMILLENNIALISM

SERMON SUNDAY MORNING:
GOD'S JUSTICE



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