

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 5, 2015

HOW SAD IS SEASONAL RELIGION?

Jim Stauffer

There has been much attention given to Passover this week. Different people emphasize different activities the Lord participated in during this week that led to His sacrifice on Calvary. With all, it culminates in what is now called Easter Sunday.

There is an obvious value in the meditation given to this great act of our Lord. The lesson of His love for us (**1 John 4:9**) in giving Himself as the *lamb without blemish (1 Pet. 1:19)* to become, as John the Baptizer said, *the lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world (John 1:29)*, is invaluable.

Through this lesson we can comprehend the commitment demanded by the teaching of the Apostle Paul to follow in the footsteps of Jesus. **Eph. 5:1** *Be ye therefore imitators of God, as beloved children; 2 and walk in love, even as Christ also loved you, and gave himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for an odor of a sweet smell. 1 Pet. 2:21* *For hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that ye should follow his steps: 22 who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: 23 who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: 24 who his own self bare our sins in his body upon the tree, that we, having died unto sins, might live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed.*

This very commitment is what Jesus taught His disciples when He said, **Matt. 16:24** *Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. 25 For whosoever would save his life shall lose it: and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it. 26 For what shall a man be profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and forfeit his life? or what shall a man give in exchange for his life?* Every example we find in scripture of the life a child of God is called to, screams to us of total commitment. From the death of the Apostle James in **Acts 12** at the hand of Herod up to and including the deaths of Peter and Paul in Rome and all of Jesus' twelve with the exception of John who recorded the Revelation of Jesus Christ for us. We see

in each of these disciples an imitation of the commitment of the Lord.

How then do the men of this world who proclaim religion expect the Lord, who will *judge the world in righteousness (Acts 17:31)* to adjudicate them righteous when they worship Him a couple of times each year on special occasions authorized by men?

Yes, I said authorized by men. Passover Sunday for the disciples of Christ was no different from any other first day of the week. In fact His disciples observed His death, burial and resurrection upon the first day of every week. (**Acts 20:7**) Yet, today we see many who claim to be honoring God and Christ in worship after this man made seasonal schedule and observe His death on occasions they have determined rather than as He has authorized. They may choose Easter, Christmas, quarterly or some other schedule ignoring what God has revealed to us about it. Paul said we are to observe the Lord's Supper (as Jesus instituted **Mat. 26:26-29**) upon the first day of each week to, *proclaim the Lord's death until he come. (1 Cor. 11:26; Acts 20:7)*

A constant theme of scripture is this designation of the loyalty of mankind to God as *the faith*. Paul tell us at the end of his life, *I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith*. He says there is waiting for him and others who do the same, *a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge shall give to me at that day. (2 Tim. 4:7,8)* Jude tells us to *contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. (Jude 3)* Combine this with what Paul told the Romans in **Rom. 5:1,2**. He says our faith allows us to be justified by the grace of God and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

In view of this, let each of us turn the question on ourselves. Do we have and demonstrate the commitment demanded by our Lord for His disciples when we come to worship Him on a few special occasions each year? What does this say about His disciples when church buildings are packed on Easter and Christmas but have far fewer worshipers on every other Sunday morning and evening as well as for Mid-Week Bible Studies scheduled for spiritual growth?

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Is your religion seasonal? Paul told Timothy to be **urgent in season, out of season** in his teaching and preaching. It is easy to feel religious and go to worship a couple of times each year when everyone else is doing it. But what about worship that is “out of season” or when others have laid their Christianity aside until the next special occasion of men?

Will you walk in His footsteps and make the commitment to worship He has demanded? Or will you walk in the footsteps of those who have designated Easter and Christmas as special occasions of worship unknown to scripture? If you choose the former, it will take commitment rather than the joining in we will see this weekend.

Worship – The Emotional Component

“God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth,” (John 4:24).

Every element of true worship involves some emotional component. The emotional component is not driven by a direct operation of the Holy Spirit (as in Calvinism) or “getting the Holy Spirit” (as in Charismatic practice). The emotional component of true worship is the result of one’s informed relationship with Deity.

The faithful disciple will go into every assembly with the emotion of joy, reverence for Deity and the anticipated interests in praising Deity and being edified. The true worshipper will leave the assembly with the emotional satisfaction of participating in all that God has directed, unto His glory. The proper emotional component is not contrived and forced or coerced. It is the result of one’s informed relationship with God.

One should not perform some emotional display, because it is perceived it is expected by others. One should not imitate the emotional display of another. The faithful one’s emotional response (seen or unseen by men) is the result of one’s informed relationship with God.

When the Word is faithfully preached, there should be a range of emotions in the hearts of faithfully listeners (remorse, assurance, joy, the satisfaction of knowledge gained). In partaking of the Lord’s Supper, remembering His death, the emotions of both sorrow and gratitude should combine in our reflection. Singing has a strong emotional component. But this emotional result is directly tied to lyrical content. What do the lyrics mean to the worshipper? Some love music and are moved by what they believe is good music, but without any self-examination or thought to lyrical content. The emotional connection derives from content (the words in the songs), not from (harmony, meter, structure). Likewise, praying is not simply a formal, mechanical exercise. It has great emotional potential, but not due to voice or poetic structure, but content and direction (praying to Deity). Giving should also have an emotional component (a cheerful giver, **II Corinthians 9:7**).

In a lecture about this in 2005 I told the audience: Ignorance of what the Bible says about the Holy Spirit, combined with the popularly promoted Charismatic concepts can combine with the passion for the contemporary, and reduce our worship to events designed toward the pleasure of men instead of God! In

this process (that may extend slowly into another generation), biblical knowledge can be set aside to pursue the emotional needs perceived by humans in their cultural context. True worship is not about competing with the modern marketplace. Our focus cannot be on drawing crowds or showing our affinity with the modern Charismatic style of worship. God is the object of worship, not the changing emotional needs of man. We must, from baptism until death, listen to the call of the gospel, not the call of the culture or religious world.

Regarding the influence of the Charismatic movement on worship, I want to recommend that we carefully consider the danger of engineering assemblies and meetings for emotional outcome. What’s at stake here is the very definition of worship! In the New Testament, worship is not presented to us as something humans set up, so that other humans can find some “spiritual high” or emotional fix. The object is to respond to God with reverence and obedience: ***“God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be held in reverence by all those around Him,” (Psalm 89:7).***

Worship is not depicted as a resurrection; conversion is! When people who are terminally unspiritual, willfully ignorant of the Scriptures and religious only in some systematic or institutional way, come to the building to be raised from the dead – we cannot cater to their wants. What these people need is conversion, not “worship” designed to meet their felt needs. When we engineer worship to answer the emotional needs of people who are not concerned with the Scriptures, we fail to serve the Lord; we give people something that can never be ultimately satisfying, and we set ourselves on the road of apostasy. Worship is the avenue God has given for converted people to show their respect for Him and honor His Son. These purposes cannot be served in any sense until we decide to follow His instructions. The Charismatic format is motivated primarily by the aim to hit a human emotional target. God’s people cannot go there!

by Warren E. Berkley

"For Such A Time As This"

There is a story in Esther of how she learned of the plot of an evil man named Haman to destroy all the Jews of the land of the Persians. By God's providence, she had become the queen, and by a petition to the King, she was allowed to make a decree that the Jews could assemble and defend themselves against all enemies. During this process, Esther had a problem. There was a rule that nobody could approach the King unless they had been summoned to appear before him. The body guards were under penalty of death if they let anyone near, no matter who it was. When Esther was counseled to bring her request to the King, she was fearful. Her cousin, Mordecai, encouraged her to take a brave step towards the King. In **Esther 4:13-14**, Mordecai told Esther that she would not be exempt from being put to death if this happened.

We read in 4:14: ***"For if you remain silent at this time,***

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relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place and you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not attained royalty for such a time as this?" What Mordecai was saying was that God will protect His people, with whoever would stand up to defend them. Mordecai just pointed out that somehow God placed her in a position that she could make a difference, and help her people. It is a great story from God's word.

We do not always know how the providence of God works. The scriptures do not address what we believe to be common. God finds ways to accomplish His will, and He uses people to do it. We are mindful in the days of the Jews when God decided to punish His people, that He would use even godless nations to accomplish His purpose. Remember that God sent Moses to Egypt carrying a rod, and Moses led nearly two million Israelites towards the promised land. God used Saul, whom He named Paul to take the gospel message of Christ unto the Gentiles. Just knowing how much Jews despised Gentiles would reveal how much Paul had to overcome to present the love of God towards all mankind.

We must also bring out the fact that the providence of God exists today. We may not be able to explain it by scripture, but we also believe in it. The words given to Esther are something we need to consider about ourselves. If by the providence of God, we come across the path of a seeker, or someone wanting to learn about Christ and His church, we need to understand that God put us there to help this individual. If we ignore the opportunity, we can be sure that God will use someone else. But as the sage admonition from her cousin would go: We do not know if we were placed here in this time and place for such an occasion to influence and/or assist someone in need of the truth.

Our job is to make the effort to share God's word. God is the one who will bring forth the results. I do not know how many times I hear that someone read one of my articles and was uplifted in spirit, or found the answer they were looking for. Most of the time I am not even aware that I have helped someone by my writing. So if by my effort of trying to serve God, that He uses me to make contact with someone who needs salvation, it is not my place to withhold the truth from anyone. God's word will accomplish what God wants. It is our sharing of that word that will help people receive salvation.

By Carey Scott

Christendom And Christian

Words are the vehicles that exchange thoughts descriptive of the perceived meaning in any given circumstance. Throughout the centuries of man's history words have defined his place with his fellow man and with Jehovah God. Often words have changed in their meaning and importance. Words define who we are. The word "Christendom" is a word that describes "the part of the world where Christianity prevails" (Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary). The idea of Christendom is where all Christian people are considered as a group. The word "Christian" means "one

who professes belief in the teachings of Jesus Christ; a disciple" (ibid). It would seem that while Christendom is not a common word in the language of the masses that more people profess to Christendom than to the ideals of being a Christian. Being under the umbrella of Christendom suggests a passive view of one's place in relationship to Jesus Christ while taking on the name of being a Christian demands a devotion to the teachings of Jesus Christ.

Christendom does not demand allegiance but rather appeals to a general acceptance of Jesus Christ. There are many people who believe that Jesus is real and that he walked among men two millennia ago. They may even go so far as to accept the idea that he is the Son of God. But to commit one's life to the principles, teachings and commands of Jesus Christ is far beyond the scope of what they are willing to do. There were disciples of Christendom in the days of Jesus. *"Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God"* (John 12:42-43).

Jesus demanded separation! His teachings were not for the faint of heart nor the uncommitted. Believing in Him was not enough. To be a disciple of Christ demanded loving the praise of God over the praise of men. Living the life of a Christian requires being different from the world (**Romans 12:1-2**). Paul exhorted the Corinthians to live separate (**2 Corinthians 6:11-18**) and come out from among the world. Ironically, Satan wants us to have a faint sense of Christ in our lives but without commitment. The young man in **Matthew 19** wanted eternal life without obligation. We find often in our lives the ease of simply living under Christendom and not living as a Christian.

The word Christian is found three times in scripture (**Acts 11:26; 26:28 and 1 Peter 4:16**). It is Peter's use of Christian that shows the striking difference in what people perceive the disciple of Christ to be and what the Lord expects. The context of **1 Peter 4:16** begins in verse 12: *"Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you."* He goes on to describe the life of a Christian as one that is *"reproached," "blasphemed,"* and who *"suffers"* and judgment beginning *"at the house of God"* (verses 13-17).

Living with a veneer of Christ is not enough. To be a follower of Jesus Christ takes more than a passive title describing a generic system of belief. True Christians are those people who bear a cross, fight the fight, run the course, walk worthy of the calling, confess the name of Christ before men, crucify themselves, separate themselves, sanctify themselves and do the will of the Father in Heaven (**Matthew 7:21-23**). Be a Christian as God desires disciples to be. Live for Jesus. Serve the Lord. Do the will of the Father.

Kent Heaton

1 John 3:1 *Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God; and such we are. For this cause the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.*

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

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NEWS AND NOTES:

SICK IN NEED OF PRAYERS:

IRENE HURD, MARY CZIRR, JAN PATRICK AND GRANT CLOTHIER.

JESSIE GIBSON IS RECUPERATING AT HOEGER HOUSE. J.R. DANIEL IS IN O.P. REGIONAL WITH PNEUMONIA. EULA HARRIS IS RECUPERATING FROM EYE SURGERY.

OUR BIBLE CLASS ON SUNDAY IS THE STUDY OF THE GOSPEL OF JOHN - WITH RON PECK. WEDNESDAY OUR STUDY IS THE SUBJECT OF PREMILLENNIALISM.

SUNDAY MORNING SERMON:
JAMES 1:19,20



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