

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.

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31

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PORTRAIT: DISCIPLES OF CHRIST?

Jim Stauffer

Casual religion is not something taught by our Master. A prominent citizen defended his religion in an interview by saying, "No, I go frequently" when it was stated he was not a regular worshiper.

Jesus gives so many illustrations of the rigorous demands of discipleship. He tells us faithfulness may cause us conflict with family that should be resolved in favor of Christ (**Mat. 10:34-37**). He tells us discipleship may appear to be easy when in reality it will bring difficulty and hardship to our lives as it has to His (**Lk. 9:57-62**). He says it may come between us and personal wealth. When it does our decision must be to follow Him with total disregard for our wealth if we wish to reach heaven (**Mat. 19:16-22**). He warns us discipleship may even threaten our lives but we cannot be His disciple if fear for our lives would give us cause to reconsider following Him (**Mat. 10:28-33**).

Jesus left the glories of heaven to come to earth and teach us how we must live to please God. Having already sinned and finding ourselves separated from God, we learn of His death on Calvary's cross to redeem us from the bondage of sin (**Phil. 2:5-8; Rom. 3:23-26**). Peter describes the very essence of the sacrificial life Jesus lived to be an example for us to follow. **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.*

In light of the price Jesus paid to purchase our freedom from sin (**Acts 20:28**) it is no wonder the New Testament has no record of disciples whose mentality toward worship and service of God was casual in nature. Those who please God are totally committed to His service.

Those examples we have of men who followed Christ are those who did not fear those who could, *kill the body but are not able to kill the soul*. They lived reverent lives in His service knowing He could, *destroy both body and soul in hell*.

Paul equated his suffering as a disciple to a, *light affliction for the moment*. He realized it would bring *an eternal weight of glory*. All of this he says is because life here is temporal but the glory God will grant for faithfulness is eternal (**2 Cor. 4:16-18**). He had similar comments for the Romans. **Rom. 8:18** *For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us-ward. 19 For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God.*

One of the great evidences of Jesus' life of teaching and His demonstration of the power of God before His chosen apostles are the lives they gave in His service. All but 1 of the 12 apostles who received the baptism of the Holy Spirit in Acts chapter 2, died a violent and premature death for their faithful teaching of the word of Jesus. The one who did not, John; was exiled to the Isle of Patmos after a failed attempt to kill him, where he recorded the book of Revelation. These men with their lives tell us Jesus was real on earth and is now real as He is on the right hand of God.

We have provided for us a record that should inspire us to put God first and foremost in our lives. We should have no need to be reminded that minor suffering should not deter our service. If the threat of death did not deter them we must overcome the obstacles we face.

In our country we must not allow ourselves to be distracted by the pleasures wealth can afford. They overcame the physical persecution and threat of death to preach the gospel.

Yet sometimes we cannot worship due to a

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headache. We should be thankful to God we are so blessed that such things as transportation even in difficult weather is much simpler for us than what the first century Christians faced in good weather. How many excuses do we offer that pale in comparison to the difficulties they overcame?

Frivolous excuses make it hard for us to sing this old refrain.

*I'm not ashamed to own my Lord
Nor to defend His cause
Maintain the honors of His word
The glory of His cross.*

SPINA ABSENTIA

by David Tant

According to my 9th Grade Revised Latin, the title means "NO BACKBONE." Physically, this devastates the body, making it impossible to function. This is tragic. But more tragic is spiritual "spina absentia." This "spinelessness" is too common in the Lord's body, and we need the "Great Physician" to stiffen the backbone so that the function of the body of Christ might not be impaired. Consider some of the disease's symptoms.

Failure To Discipline Influential Members

Many denominations are reluctant to practice discipline, for this may cause them to lose money, members and popularity. But could it be that some of us have the same thinking? There are churches where influential members are guilty of flagrant sins, and nothing is done about it. Elders' relatives, rich folks, preachers' children, etc., are winked at in their sin because of a "don't rock the boat" attitude. If such is not a "respect of persons," and therefore a sin (**James 2:1-9**), then what is it?

Failure To Teach An Unpopular Truth

Is it possible that part of the problem with immodest dress in the church is because some teachers, preachers and elders are afraid to teach their convictions? Afraid they would have some upset people to deal with? Is there any connection to Paul's urgent charge to Timothy to "*preach the word; be urgent in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching*" (**II Tim. 4:1-2**)? Yes, Paul knew there would be "*itching ears,*" but they do not change the teacher's responsibility to speak the truth in love. How many other unpopular subjects are left alone, which then harm the church, because error will not stay in the closet!

Failure To Stand For Right When Among Those Who Do Wrong

Peter got in the wrong crowd, and didn't have the backbone to stand up for Jesus. Where is your tongue when you are among those who are

gossiping, slandering God's name and telling filthy jokes? What about the admonition to "*reprove the unfruitful works of darkness*" (**Eph. 5:11**)? If one is ashamed to stand up and be counted on the Lord's side, perhaps a careful study of **Matthew 10:32** and **II Timothy 1:8** might prove to be helpful.

Failure To Rebuke Or Exhort A Friend Who Is In Error

How misguided are such friends. If I am about to eat something contaminated with poison, should my friend warn me? Love should motivate us to do what is in the eternal interest of our friends, and it may mean correcting them, as Paul did Peter (**Gal. 2:11ff**). Granted, our words will not always be well received (**Gal. 4:16**), but a soul is worth more than a superficial friendship any day, isn't it?

Failure To Correct Our Children

Dr. Spock's philosophy of not saying "No" to our children for fear of warping their personalities seems to be common today. Even our government in some areas seems to consider a corrective tap on a child's bottom to be a grievous offense. We are reminded of the evil that came upon Eli's house "*because his sons brought a curse on themselves and he did not rebuke them*" (**I Sam. 3:13**). Wise Solomon urges:

"Correct your son, and he will give you comfort; He will also delight your soul" (**Prov. 29:17**).

Children without discipline are considered as children who are illegitimate, i.e. without fathers (**Heb. 12:8**)

Failure To Be A Man And Admit "I Was Wrong"

What injury pride and ego bring when they refuse to allow us to humble ourselves and admit that we, too, are capable of error. How blessed are those who have the spirit of David and the prodigal son who were able to swallow their pride and say, "*I have sinned.*" It seems that this spirit of pride comes dangerously close to those in **I John 1:8** who say they have no sin.

Failure To Teach Sound Doctrine

With some the norm must be "Offend no one, be tolerant of all." Obviously it should never be a Christian's intention to offend anyone, but truth sometimes offends. It seems Christ offended some.

"Then the disciples ...said to Him, 'Do You know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this statement?'" (**Matt. 15:12**).

Paul must have offended some, which earned him being stoned, beaten and imprisoned. He even called names (**I Tim. 1:20, II Tim. 2:17**), as did our Lord (**Matt. 23:14, Mark 8:15, etc.**). We must not be as those who told the prophets to "*Speak to us pleasant words*" (**Isa. 30:10**), but must be willing to endure sound doctrine, which sometimes "*reproves and rebukes*" (**II Tim. 4:2**). There are many symptoms of "spina absentia", and

we need to learn to recognize the warning signs, and take preventive steps, lest we be overcome, and thus render the body of Christ a helpless invalid. Too much is at stake for us to allow this disease to go untreated.

Story Of The Text 12

Robert F. Turner

Sir Walter Scott, upon his deathbed, asked his attendant to bring him "the book." When asked, "What book?" he replied, "The Book, the Bible! There is only one Book." This, from a man of letters, poses the question: If the Bible is "the only Book" by which to die, is it not truly the one Book by which to live?

My mother taught me respect for God's book, long before I knew much of its content, or critical details. Early teachers, such as N.B. Hardeman and L.L. Brigrance, enriched that respect with analytical information, organized and interrelated. The challenges of skeptics in a state university forced me to examine evidences for its canonicity, integrity and credibility; and hunger for the purest truth led me to long hours of study in Greek, the language of the text. BUT YEARS OF EXPERIENCE IN THE USE OF GOD'S WORD IN MY LIFE have taught me its greatest lessons, and its value.

We close this series on the text with this anonymous eulogy of the Bible, kept in our notes since 1934.

"Many years ago I entered the wonderful temple of God's revelation. I entered the portico of Genesis, and walked down through the Old Testament Art Gallery where the pictures of Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David and Daniel hung on the wall.

I entered the Music Room of the Psalms where the Spirit swept the keyboard of inspiration and brought forth the dirge-like wail of the weeping prophet, Jeremiah; to the grand, impassioned strains of Isaiah; until it seemed that every reed and harp in God's organ of nature responded to the tuneful touch of David, the sweet singer of Israel. I entered the chapel of Ecclesiastes where the voice of the Preacher was heard; and passed into the conservatory of Sharon where the lily of the valley's sweet-scented spices filled and perfumed my life. I entered the business room of the Proverbs, and passed into the observatory room of the Prophets where I saw many telescopes of various sizes, some pointing to far off events, but all concentrated upon the Bright Morning Star, which was soon to rise over the moon-lit hills of Judea, for our salvation.

I entered the audience room of the King of Kings and was enlightened from the standpoint of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John; entered the Acts of the Apostles where the Holy Spirit was doing His office work in the forming of the church; passed into the

Correspondence Room where sat Paul, Peter, James, Jude and John penning their epistles. I stepped into the Throne of Revelation, where all towered into glittering peaks. I got a vision of the King seated upon His throne in all His glory, and I cried:

"All Hail the power of Jesus' Name

Let angels prostrate fall;

Bring forth the royal diadem

And crown Him Lord of All."

Truly, THERE IS ONLY ONE BOOK!!

WHY I LEFT THE BAPTIST CHURCH

by Patrick Donahue

I have been asked several times through the years why I left the Baptist Church. My answer is that it was not just because of one thing, but it involved several issues and most importantly, an attitude. As a general rule, Baptist people are not as diligent and careful in their study of God's word as they should be (and some so called Christians are like that too), and this leads to many false teachings. Two of these false teachings were at the forefront of my decision to leave the Baptist church in November of 1981.

The Baptist church emphasizes you must "accept Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour" to be saved. This is true enough if you understand that they mean by this phrase the same as what Philip meant when he said in **Acts 8:37** "*if thou believest with all thine heart.*" The problem is Baptists say this is all you have to do, excluding the necessity of water baptism (in order to salvation) in their teaching. Many texts (**for example Mark 16:16, Acts 2:38, Acts 22:16, and I Peter 3:21**) show clearly that a person does have to be baptized to be saved. My opinion is that many Baptists are too wedded to their system of "*faith only*" to accept the plain meaning of these passages. After diligently studying this issue for about three years, I determined that I must change and follow what the scriptures actually say on the purpose of water baptism, instead of continuing to follow what I had always been taught on it.

Another major issue I studied in-depth in the period leading up to my conversion was the "once saved always saved" question. Countless passages (**for example Galatians 5:2,4, II Peter 2:20-22, Hebrews 3:1,12, and James 5:19-20**) show that a Christian can "fall from grace," and that when a Christian sins he must repent to be forgiven (**Acts 8:22, I John 9**). My opinion is that most Baptists continue to hold on to their false "once saved always saved" position because it makes them feel more comfortable. They don't ever want to have to worry about losing their salvation, no matter how they live. In actuality, the Baptist way is a de-emphasis upon obedience to God, whereas God's way most certainly requires our obedience (**Matthew 7:21, Hebrews 5:9**).

But as I said, these two issues are just a symptom of the problem. Diligent Christians struggle with different aspects of Biblical issues such as withdrawal (**I Corinthians 5**), the covering (**I Corinthians 11:2-16**), divorce and remarriage questions (**Matthew 19:9**), and etc. Many Baptists simply ignore these teachings and therefore any difficulties in their implementation are moot for them. This attitude is the underlying reason why I left the Baptist church. I am very thankful to the many who helped me see the error of my way during those years.

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

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PLEASE REMEMBER THE FOLLOWING IN YOUR PRAYERS: J.R. DANIEL, GRANT CLOTHIER, JAN PATRICK AND STEVE WIMP.

MARY CZIRR IS UNDER HOSPICE CARE.

OUR CURRENT STUDIES ARE: SUNDAY MORNING: THE BOOK OF ACTS - BYRON TAYLOR AND WEDNESDAY EVENING: THE SCHEME OF REDEMPTION - JIM STAUFFER

SUNDAY MORNING SERMON: THE ONE TRUE CHURCH



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