

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.

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SEEKERS AND TEACHERS

Jim Stauffer

Jesus spoke clearly to each of these groups. He told His disciples, **Matt. 28:19** *“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”* As the Savior of mankind, Jesus pleads with us to come unto Him for relief of the burden of sin (**Mat. 11:28-30**). He explains the ease of this, **Matt. 7:7** *“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.”* **8** *“For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.”*

The natural forces of those who wish to learn of the Savior and those charged with the responsibility to teach them can and will come together if each man does his part. There is an element of perseverance required for these paths to cross.

There are many ways in which people meet one another casually yet with sufficient acquaintance to satisfy the need of the seeker and fulfill the responsibility of the teacher. The Bible is written to teach us in such matters and often does so by way of example. These examples are usually emphasizing the point that our routine daily lives bring us in contact with those who are seeking to know the Lord, or if we are the seeker, to those who can teach us.

In **Acts chapter 8** we read of a seeker, the Ethiopian eunuch, who was attempting to understand the prophecy of Isaiah. Philip was instructed by an angel of the Lord to intersect him on the road to Gaza. In so doing he found him studying the passage from **Isaiah 53**. When the eunuch asked for an explanation of the passage, *Philip opened his mouth and beginning from this Scripture he preached Jesus to him.* As we read on the eunuch responded to Philip’s preaching of Christ by confessing Jesus as the Son of God and being baptized. An example that illustrates the heart of man can indeed *come unto* Jesus when it is met with the instruction of God’s word. A seeker and teacher

must come together to accomplish this task.

In the **16th chapter of Acts**, Paul met a woman named Lydia as he went to a common place of worship near the river. She was receptive to the words Paul spoke and she and her household were baptized. Her response is described as being *faithful to the Lord*. That her motive in worship was to please God is verified by her acceptance of Christ. She was worshiping in the instruction of Judaism until she learned the very Scriptures she honored in the Old Testament identified Christ as the Messiah she sought. As a seeker of God’s will she needed a teacher to guide her.

Our final example is the jailer in Philippi (**also Acts 16**) where Paul and Silas were imprisoned for preaching the gospel. In this city Paul exorcised a young girl of a spirit of divination. When he did the fortunes of those who used her for profit were gone. This upset them and they accused Paul and Silas of violating Roman law and then had them jailed. As a result of a miraculous earthquake all the prisoners’ shackles were unfastened and the doors opened. The jailer, presuming all had escaped was ready to take his own life rather than wait for the authorities to do it for him. Paul calmed him by saying, *Do not harm yourself, for we are all here.* This act with presumably some knowledge of what Paul and Silas had been teaching in the community moved the jailer to say, *Sirs, was trust I do to be saved?* As a result of this change in his heart they were able to teach him about the Christ and baptize him in the same hour of the night.

There are many forces in our lives that remind us we are His creation. When that happens we are open to seeking His wisdom and obeying His will. Seekers can by turning to His word find their way. But when the need exists, He has provided His faithful servants to teach and instruct those who are in need. It is vital we realize a consistent effort on our part could provide that instruction for a lost soul just at the time they are seeking the Lord. May this encourage us to be diligent in our efforts to teach His will to all who will hear.

THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS

"Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill" (Matthew 5:17 NKJV). *"Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfill them"* (Matthew 5:17 RSV). Did Jesus come to destroy the Law and Prophets? Or, did Jesus come to fulfill them? What is Matthew telling us?

The word *destroy* and the word *abolish* in both the NKJV and the RSV are translations of the same Greek word, *katalyo*, defined as: to dissolve, destroy, disunite, demolish (*Blue Letter Bible*; *Mounce's Dict. of Old and New Testament Words*, 177). **Ephesians 2:15** (cf. **Colossians 2:14**) says that Jesus did in fact take the Law of Moses (the entire Law, predicated on the 10 Commandments) away; He abolished the Law. Here abolished translates *katargeo* "to release, destroy, nullify, cause something to be useless" (*Mounce*, 177). After Jesus' work on the cross was finished, the Law was no longer in effect. While the Law of Moses regulated the lives of Israel (civic, religious, nationally), its greater purpose was to point the Jews to Christ. When the Messiah came, the need for the Law ceased. On the other hand, when Jesus *"nailed the Law to the cross,"* He was fulfilling what the Law and Prophets said about His eventual mission. Jesus didn't destroy prophetic predictions; He fulfilled them completely (**Luke 24:44**). So sure is Jesus in doing this that He said: *"I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled"* (Matthew 5:18). With accuracy down to every minute detail, Jesus fulfilled the Law. *"The Scripture cannot be broken"* (John 10:35).

Why would we say that the Old Law was unimportant? *"Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven"* (Matthew 5:19). When Jesus delivered His Sermon on the Mount, the Law of Moses was still in effect. It is not the Law of Moses per se that Jesus strikes against; He sounds an alarm about the many Jewish manipulations of the Law. Yes, the Law is important; do what it says to do. But make sure it is God's law and not man's. And don't reason that we can dismiss even the smallest of God's commandments (whatever that may be).

"For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:20). How can we outshine the Pharisees and scribes? These are religious people; they know the Law. How can we be expected to go beyond them? And why does Jesus demand this of us?

Should we quantify our duties to God? The Jews counted 248 commandments (do these) and 365 prohibitions (don't do these). Do we go beyond that? As Jesus continues His sermon, it becomes clear that kingdom citizens are those who have renewed hearts. Outward, overt actions are important. But the motivations behind what we practice are important, too.

And there is the rub. The Sermon on the Mount is an invitation to a party of epic proportions. Its demands are deadly serious. "You have heard this? But I say unto you. When you join me on the mountain you accept me as Lord." Will we do it?

Randy Harshbarger

SOMEONE IS ALWAYS WATCHING

A scenario which most of us have seen or at least heard about is one of a little boy watching his father shave and imitating the procedure with an enormous handful of shaving cream and a pretend razor. Very carefully, the child mimics his father paying attention to every small detail as done by his father, whom he considers a "hero."

It is not uncommon for children to look up to those who are older or wiser than they are. For this reason, little brothers and sisters will never cease to imitate their older siblings. These scenarios, however, are not exclusive to older and younger siblings or even younger or older people. The truth of the matter is that just as you and I look up to certain individuals, there are some looking to us for guidance and example. To those who are being looked up to, a certain responsibility is given. It is, however, their actions which are molding and influencing people whether they realize it or not.

Setting a good example has been our responsibility during our life. Most of us still have that responsibility. We are careful of what we say and how we behave because of our children and others who look up to us. Most of us, without thinking, do what we can so that those around us will have a good example to go by. There are some families where a child has to grow up in an immoral household with no decent person to look up to. This is tragic, because many times the child is stripped of opportunities, and he will grow up acting as those he was exposed to as a child.

If young people and new Christians do not have strong examples to follow as they test their wings, the chances of them growing into strong Christians decrease. It is our responsibility as Christians to help one another grow, and we can do a great deal by simply setting a good example. Many Christians do not feel confident enough to talk to someone about the Bible and, because of this, feel like they aren't doing what they should. If you are living in a way that is pleasing to God, you are reaching people. Though you may not always realize it, there is someone learning

from you. If you are behaving in a way a Christian should, then those around you are getting a good message. If you are not living as you should, then those lessons, too, are being learned by those around you. We can be a great help to those who imitate us if we will do as Paul suggested to the Ephesians and *"be imitators of God as dear children"* (Eph. 5:1).

By Joshuah Ellis in News & Notes, Aug. 1, 2004

WATER BAPTISM IS NECESSARY

by Allan Dvorak

It was an unusual day. First, the sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind filled the house. What appeared to be tongues of fire sat upon each of the men inside the house. Those same men, the apostles of Jesus, began to speak in foreign languages, in languages which they did not know.

The news about the events taking place began to spread through the city of Jerusalem. Soon a crowd had gathered to see and hear what was going on, but they were confused. Were these men drunk? Among the Jews in the crowd were those who had come from many other places to observe religious feasts in Jerusalem. They were amazed that these men from Galilee were speaking in languages which they had not studied.

The twelve stood up and spoke to the crowd about what was happening. In essence, they said, "It's not drunkenness. This is what the prophet Joel predicted. The Holy Spirit would be poured out and those who received Him would prophesy." The apostles continued to speak to the crowd about Jesus.

They reaffirmed the truth of the resurrection of Jesus by noting Old Testament prophecy and giving their own eyewitness testimony. Jesus had been exalted to the right hand of God and was already reigning as Lord in heaven. No political correctness for these preachers! They stated plainly more than once that the Jewish nation had put the Son of God to death!

The message of the preachers on this day touched the hearts of the listeners. They asked, *"What shall we do?"* They believed that Jesus had been raised from the dead and was therefore the Son of God as He had claimed. Many people today would have told them that they didn't have to do anything; they were already saved!

The apostle Peter, however, did not tell them that they were already saved, even though it was evident that they both believed and were aware of their sin in crucifying the Christ (as evidenced by their question to the apostles). He said that they needed to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission (forgiveness) of sins. About three thousand people did

exactly that – they were baptized and the Lord added them to His church.

Many preachers are telling people today that they do not need to be baptized to be saved. Water baptism, it is said, is only a symbolic act which pictures our salvation at the point of faith. The Bible, on the other hand, says that baptism saves us through the resurrection of Jesus Christ (**1 Peter 3:21**). How can baptism be unnecessary for salvation if it is *"for the remission of sins"*? The apostle Paul wrote that we are baptized into Christ and that, in so doing, we *"put on Christ"* (**Romans 6:3; Galatians 3:26-27**).

If you want to read for yourself the story of that unusual day, Pentecost, it is recorded in Acts 2.
~via Teaching Truth; Madison, Alabama.

When Is A 'Miracle' Really A Miracle?

A fund raising letter from a local hospital said: "Miracles at this place are part of everyday life. Miracles that come from technology. And miracles that come from human caring. I've seen them happen." This is an excellent example of the inaccurate use of the word "miracle" in modern usage.

What this man is describing IS a wonderful thing. It's great to see a sick person recover. It is thrilling to view the fruits of recent technological advances in medical care. We are seeing things that folks only a few years ago never imagined. Open-heart procedures, organ transplants, laser surgery and a host of other new medical methodologies have been perfected in rapid succession. It is truly amazing - but, it is NOT a miracle! And, today we understand more than ever before about the "psychology" that is associated with physical illness. And this is surely helpful in bringing about cures but, it is NOT a miracle!

You see, by definition - and in accordance with accurate Biblical usage - a miracle is "an effect in the physical world which surpasses all known human or natural power ... supernatural." So, when a doctor uses a sophisticated new medical device to affect the cure of a seriously ill patient, there is no miracle involved. While the technology may be new and very advanced, it is still a procedure that is known and understood by men. It is an action that is in accord with natural law. It is not supernatural. It is NOT a miracle.

Miracles are things like: walking on water, turning water into wine, raising a man who had been dead for four days; etc. These things defy a natural explanation. They are truly supernatural. The Bible records many instances of true miracles - but it also tells us that no such miracles are taking place in the world today (**1 Cor. 13:8-13**). No, there are no miracles at that hospital - or any place else!

by Greg Gwin, Beacon Electronic Edition

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

Elders: Ron Peck and Jim Stauffer

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AND VISITS.**

**SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE
CLASS - A STUDY OF
PRAYER - RON PECK**

**WEDNESDAY BIBLE CLASS -
THE BOOK OF ROMANS -
JIM STAUFFER**

**SUNDAY MORNING SERMON:
DO WE OVEREMPHASIZE
DOCTRINAL ISSUES?**



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