

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

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A PICTURE OF LOVE FOR THE TRUTH

Jim Stauffer

Paul shows us a side of him that to the child of God is truly beautiful to behold. The following quote is a portion of chapter one in Philippians. **Phil. 1:14** *and that most of the brethren, trusting in the Lord because of my imprisonment, have far more courage to speak the word of God without fear. 15 Some, to be sure, are preaching Christ even from envy and strife, but some also from good will; 16 the latter do it out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel; 17 the former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition rather than from pure motives, thinking to cause me distress in my imprisonment. 18 What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and in this I rejoice. Yes, and I will rejoice,.*

Notice how the apostle endures both his imprisonment and the envy and strife created out of jealousy over his good reputation among the brethren for this very thing.

First, he refers to the increased courage his brethren have to speak the truth due to his faithful endurance during his imprisonment - **vs 14**. No doubt the apostle had this effect on his brethren who observed him preaching the truth in prison in spite of that being the reason for his incarceration (**Phil. 4:21; Acts 28:30**).

We see the source of this strength in the disciples in **Acts 4:29,30** as they prayed to God for strength in withstanding the threats of the same people who crucified Christ. Peter and John specifically had been imprisoned for *teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. (Acts 4:2)*

Paul, himself, prayed for and asked brethren to pray for him to have the courage to speak the truth boldly even while he was in prison (**Eph. 6:19; Col. 4:3,4**)

There were differing reasons for those who preached the gospel. Some out of love for it, realizing they too would be persecuted (**see Acts 5:42**). The only selfish motive for the disciples preaching the truth out of love was the salvation of their own souls.

But some preached out of envy, hoping to make Paul's suffering increase. There have been many illicit

motivations for preaching the gospel such as money, which we see in the TV evangelists of today, but also for personal aggrandizement (**Mat. 23:5**) or for an assortment of reasons for personal gain (**Rom. 16:17,18**). When we see people whose preaching seems to consistently bring glory and honor to themselves, we know their motive is not love for the truth of the message. When we see people preaching the gospel and becoming wealthy, we know their motive is not love for the truth. Ask yourself a very pertinent question as you look around you in society. What did Christ receive for *proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom?* (**Mat. 4:23**) We know He received scorn and hatred for teaching something men did not like. What did Paul receive for *proclaiming unto you the testimony of God* which he defines as knowing *nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified* (**1 Cor. 2:1,2**). Imprisonment which led to his death.

Those who were preaching out of envy and not out of love for the gospel of Christ go against the very concept of discipleship demonstrated by Christ in His life and death, and by Paul as he taught us to follow in the footsteps of Jesus. **Phil. 2:3** *Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; 4 do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. 5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. 8 Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.*

But Paul was truly one who loved the truth of the gospel and what it would do for those who received it and therefore did not suffer from the efforts of those who preached it out of envy. He rejoiced for those who received the gospel of Christ regardless of the deficiency of love in the person who delivered it. *Glory to God in the highest* (**Luke 2:14**).

THE AUTHORITY OF JESUS

"Now when Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, pleading with Him, saying, Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, dreadfully tormented. And Jesus said to him, I will come and heal him. The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that you should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed. For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it. When Jesus heard it, He marveled, and said to those who followed, Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel" (Matthew 8:5-10).

Matthew 4:23 and Matthew 9:35 serve as bookends for this first phase of Jesus' earthly ministry. Chapter eight begins to emphasize the healing work of Jesus as specific cases of need are brought before Him. *The sermon* that still, after 2000 years, evokes awe and wonder has concluded; now, Matthew builds on Jesus' ministry of healing. Jesus' authority clearly permeates the Sermon on the Mount ("You have heard it said, but I say unto you!"). And now His ability to heal the sick, raise the dead, and cast out demons helps to solidify His authority, at least to those who have hearts who will listen.

While the gospel was to the Jew first, Matthew makes it clear that the good news was also for the Gentiles. Jesus would send His apostles to all nations with salvation. Now, the centurion, a Gentile army man, comes to Jesus; soon the words and power of the Master would assuage the needs of this desperate man. Jesus says that now, even Gentiles would find their place at the table alongside those venerable patriarchs, such as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. How could this be? Jesus gives the answer: FAITH!

Imagine a rough-hewn Roman soldier, a man accustomed to "bossing" people around, coming to Jesus not with a demand, but with a heartfelt plea. The Jews had been conquered by the Romans; now, though, this man of authority comes with a request clothed in humility and faith to the only one who has all authority. When the centurion commanded his soldiers to act, they did so; yet, the centurion was ultimately acting on behalf of Caesar. And when Jesus acted, He was acting on behalf of His Father. When the centurion "said the word," it was done. And when Jesus "said the word," it was done. Whether Jesus was present or not, His word expressed heaven's will and word and authority. Jesus was not a magician; He was (is) God's Son.

Jesus is amazed that the centurion had such great faith. Both were men of authority. Both could and did utter commands with the assurance that their desires would be carried out. But did the centurion know and

believe that Jesus' authority was different from and far above that of any earthly power and authority? Isn't that what faith is all about? Do we have that kind of faith today? Do we really believe that Jesus is our Savior and that He will save us when we come to Him in faith, in trust, in commitment to His authority? Jesus said "the word." Do we believe it?

Randy Harshbarger

A Chance Encounter at the Feed Store *Ed Lewis | Currie, North Carolina, USA*

Very early in October, 2016, I stopped at the local feed store to buy horse feed. The lady who owns the store with her husband was immersed in a serious conversation with a man on the subject of tithing.

"I never allow anything to interfere with my tithe," he said. "I can't get new tires for my truck because I put my tithing first every Sabbath."

Two red flags went up in my mind! I had previously discussed spiritual things with the owner of the store and she had informed me that she was "way past salvation and doctrine," and that she was now interested in the Nethinim. Or did she say the Nephthalim? It didn't really matter, really, 'cause I had no idea what she was talking about! But I was pretty sure my knowledge or lack thereof was not crucial to my salvation. But, I did know that she was going to be no help to this sincere but misguided man. So, I did what I do so well: I inserted myself into the conversation without invitation.

I inquired as to the subject at hand and the man again spoke of his dedication to tithing on every Sabbath. I complimented him on his zeal and asked from where it had arisen. In short, he and his wife had "grown up Catholic but had given up on it in mid-adulthood because it was all about a fierce and condemning God. They had been searching for answers for years but "nobody in Boston seemed even interested, much less willing to help." But, when they moved from Boston to the South, they met some people who "introduced them to the law of God as found in the Bible." And now they were studying their Bibles (actually the wife more than he) and they "felt sorry for anyone who didn't see the necessity of Sabbath-day worship." "Why Jesus, himself, observed the Sabbath," he said. "So, why shouldn't Christians - - if they claim to follow Christ?"

I asked the gentleman if I could ask a few questions because he had aroused my interest. "Sure." "Well," I began, "do you know why Jesus kept the Sabbath, observed the tithe, circumcision, and the Passover?" "I guess because it was the law of God," he answered. "You're absolutely right," I said. I then showed him **1 Peter 2:21-22** and told him that Jesus kept the Law of Sinai perfectly--never broke a single one. "But there is

another reason," I said. He looked at me with a blank stare. "Because Jesus was a Jew," I said. "He was never a Christian. He had to die and be resurrected so there could BE Christians." The man was incredulous! "What do you mean?" he asked. So, I read the lineage of Christ in **Matt 1** to show that the Lord was born, lived, and died a descendant of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. "So what?" he asked "So--here's my second question. Are you or your wife Jewish?" "Do I look Jewish?" He laughed. "Why, does it matter?" "Yes, it matters greatly. You, like me, are a Gentile," I said. "Yes, I guess so, but what difference does that make? Isn't the gospel for all men?"

"You're right again", I said. "The gospel is for all mankind. But we were not talking about the gospel; we were talking about the Law of Moses." So, I let him read for himself **Deut 5:1-22**. Then, I explained that the Law of Moses was given only to the Jews, the covenanted descendants of Abraham to separate them from the "nations." "No Gentile was ever subject to the Law of Moses except in the case of a proselyte." "Huh, I don't know about that," he said. So, I had him read **Exodus 31:16,17**. Immediately, the light came on. He got it. I was stunned. Rarely does anyone understand this crucial fact so quickly.

"Can I get another question," I asked. "What did Jesus do concerning that law?" "What do you mean?" he said. And I could tell he was still grappling with what he had just read. So, I took him to **Matt 5:17** and **Heb 8** to show him that Christ came to fulfill the law of Moses and the prophets and to replace it with another which offered the grace of God and the forgiveness of sins. How that no flesh can be justified by the works of the law, but Christ offered forgiveness and acceptance by God by faith in Christ and obedience to Him as king. How that being in Christ was superior to being under law. And then I asked him to read **Col. 2:14-17**. He looked at me as though he had been punched in the stomach. I continued, "Christ lived under the Law of Moses, but **Matt 4:17 & 23** says He preached the gospel of His coming kingdom. But these blessings of forgiveness and reconciliation, and freedom from the curse of the law, are found ONLY in Christ." He shook his head in ascent. I wanted to go on but this poor man was overwhelmed. "I never knew this," he said.

"Well, let's get together and study," I said. "You said you and your wife study every day, and my wife and I do too." "I'd like that," he said. "I'll give you a call and we'll get together." "Great!" I said. "You'll be amazed at what the Bible says about how to get into Christ and become a Christian." "Okay. I'll call," he promised. So, I started to leave as we shook hands -- never expecting anything more and, frankly, wondering if I'd ever get that call. As I was reaching for the door, he said, "can you give me a hint about the "in Christ" thing?" "You bet!" So I showed him **Gal 3**, **Rom 6**, and **Eph 1**. I explained that the gospel is the DBR of Christ and that obeying that form

puts one IN CHRIST. I left thinking: "maybe I will get that call."

4 days later; on Wednesday night, I had the "short talk" after Bible study. I was excited to share with the brethren my experience at the feed store and to solicit their prayers on behalf of this man, his wife, and myself -- now convinced that he would call. The saints were excited and at each assembly after that they would ask me, "has the man called?" Dejected, I would respond, "not yet." For four weeks this went on until finally no one asked anymore.

Despondent, I went to the feed store to get his phone number -- to no avail. The owner had it but was reluctant to give it to me without the man's permission. I understood, but I was NOT happy.

Four more weeks passed and one day an unknown number appeared on my phone as it rang. I answered. IT WAS HIM! "Can you come over? My wife and I are afraid we have made a big mistake. Will you study with us?" "Name the date, the time, and the location, and we'll be there, I said, trying to be calm and act like it was no big deal. "Our house, tomorrow night, 6:30," he said. "Lord willing, we'll be there."

So, we went, after first imploring the Lord for wisdom and reminding Him of His promise to go with us. And I did something my wife had been suggesting for forty years: I let them talk, listened to their concerns, and answered only when questioned. In the process, the principles of "adding to and taking away" and speaking as the oracles of God were established. Also, we got to the "in Christ thing." Included of course the plan of salvation. 3 hours in all.

4 days later they came to our house for dinner and a study. We finally got the Law of Moses and the gospel separated and then they told us of some of the things they'd been taught. Even brought what they called "conversion materials". Then they shared their angst over the 13 vows they were required to take before they could be baptized and taken into 7th Day Adventism. We showed them in the scriptures that the ONLY public prerequisite for baptism into Christ was the "good confession." They are honest, zealous for truth, and hungry for more.

Worthy Is the Lamb!

ADDENDUM:Both man and wife baptized into Christ two weeks ago. And there's more! They have arranged classes with two people from the 7th day group. Start Saturday!

Taken from Meditate on These Things, a publication by Keith Sharp

Psa. 13:5 But I have trusted in thy lovingkindness; My heart shall rejoice in thy salvation.

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

OUR ADDRESS IS:

7845 Cottonwood Dr.

Lenexa, Kansas 66216

913-764-9170

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NEWS AND NOTES:

PLEASE REMEMBER JAN PATRICK,
STEPHEN KIMKER, WENDY
TAYLOR AND STEVE WIMP IN
PRAYER AS THEY DEAL WITH
HEALTH ISSUES.

SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE CLASS -
FOLLOWING THE MESSIAH
RON PECK

WEDNESDAY EVENING BIBLE
CLASS - FORGIVENESS
JIM STAUFFER

SUNDAY SERMON:
EUPHEMISMS ARE DECEPTIVE



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