

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.

December
9
2018

THE GREATEST LOSS

by Jim Stauffer

Which was the greater loss, the fall into captivity of Israel and Judah or the souls that perished in the process?

Anytime I mention biblical topics that affect society I worry the readers will gravitate to the social side of the issue and fail to grasp how important the biblical lesson is.

Such is the case as I ponder the effects of the breakdown of the family on the nation.

God created man with family in mind. He taught man he was to become one flesh with the woman he would take for his wife (**Gen. 2:24**).

He then teaches them what they need to know to live happily in Eden, a paradise on earth (**Gen. 2:15-17**). Not long after the fall of man he was taught concerning worship by way of sacrifice to God (**Gen. 4:3-5 cf. Heb. 11:4**).

Throughout His dealings with man there is consistent instruction regarding both familial relationship and the need for the family to be devoted to God. Children are to love and honor their parents (**Ex. 20:12**). Parents are to bring their children up under the influence of God's wisdom and all are to love God with heart, soul and might (**Deut. 6:1-9; Pro. 22:6**).

God's design was then for one man and one woman to be joined in an effort to worship and revere Him and teach their children the same.

We learn from our study of the Old Testament how the Israelites failed to completely drive out the inhabitants of Canaan as God commanded them (**Deut. 7:1-11**). This resulted in an association with idolators who remained in the land and who infiltrated the nation by marrying the sons and daughters of Israel. As the contamination of the nation continued God decided to send the northern 10 tribes into Assyrian captivity and later Judah to Babylon.

All of these difficulties arose when men deemed God's wisdom less desirable than the pleasure they could achieve in the immoral lifestyle associated with

idol worship.

Here is the principle God teaches us all through His word, *"but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, 'YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY.'"*

(**1 Peter 1:15,16 cf. Lev. 11:44**) Holiness as our goal focuses our attention on God's wisdom. When we focus on His wisdom, we are drawn to Him and we teach our family to do likewise. Such families are the foundation of a strong society that respects and honors things more noble than simple pleasure derived from fleshly endeavors. When families are so constructed the message is communicated and society avoids being overrun with rampant immorality founded in selfish desire.

When this principle is ignored, families no longer stay together, children are not reared in God's wisdom and the net effect is a society that begins to crumble and eventually completely destroys itself.

But, while that is a great loss, it is not the greatest loss. The greatest loss is the salvation of each individual that is promised to the faithful in **1 Pet. 1:9**.

You see a strong nation is a by-product of lives lived in His service, loyal to the principles He espouses. But the greatest value is found in each individual soul that learns to walk in the footsteps of Jesus. For after encouraging man to deny himself and follow Him, Christ said this about the value of the soul of a man, *"For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?"* (**Matthew 16:26**)

GOD'S GRACE

"And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, although I was formerly a blasphemer, a

persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.

(1 Timothy 1:12-15).

Faithful, trustworthy sayings are found five times in the three letters Paul wrote to younger preachers **(1 Timothy 1:15; 3:1; 4:9; 2 Timothy 2:11; Titus 3:8)**. Faithful people and faithful sayings can be relied on. Obvious axioms of trust, faith, and reliability are meant to give the believer confidence in God and in what God is doing to bring salvation to all. How these words must have stirred Paul's heart, a heart at one time that gushed with hatred and violence toward those of the Way. Paul's sincerity is not questioned; there is something good about not violating the conscience. But when the great light of Jesus Christ blinded him, he fell prostrate on the Damascus Road; when he fell before his Savior, the good news of the gospel became a reality for him, the chief of sinners.

It was that same gospel that Timothy was to continue preaching during his stay in Ephesus. We have more information in this letter from Paul to his *"true son in the faith"* than we have in the book of Acts. That is, the troubles, false teaching, and betrayals of the Lord are highlighted in Paul's instructions to Timothy; "something is going on" among God's people in that ancient city. But, if someone such as Paul could be saved, why not others? If he could find mercy before God, then surely even the idolaters in Ephesus could come to the Lord. Paul knew about God's longsuffering. And his conversion became a pattern for all sinners. Whatever we make about the "unusual" events of **Acts nine**, it remains true that all who come to the Lord now, must come, can only come to Him in obedience to His will. That was true of Paul, too.

Paul's recounting his conversion could embolden Timothy to press on. Was this the first time Timothy had heard about Paul's journey to Damascus? In fighting the good warfare, in resisting those who rejected God's word, in opposing those who made shipwreck of the faith, Timothy could be encouraged. Timothy was committed to the Lord; still, wouldn't he sometimes need a reminder that his cause was the Lord's righteous cause? Timothy, be faithful, be alert, don't take your eyes off the commander. Keep your good conscience; keep your strong faith.

These words from Paul to Timothy are needed today. Preachers, elders, yea, all who endeavor to stand, whether in Ephesus, or in the USA, or in any other part of the world, need to find and keep faithful resolve in the work of the kingdom. The faith, the objective body of truth given by God still remains. Can we fight alone and succeed? No! Neither could Paul or

Timothy. They needed and we need God's grace. Thankfully, that is what we have.

Randy Harshbarger

And Now, A Time Of Fasting

We are all familiar with the first verse of **Ecclesiastes 3**, even if your first exposure to it (like me) was the nineteen sixties song by the 'Byrds', "Turn, Turn, Turn": *"To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven"*. It was the basis for my article last week, and again this week. We spoke last week about 'Thanksgiving' and noted that there is no reason to feel bad about a time of feasting which is part of the natural ebb and flow of life. Embrace, enjoy and appreciate those times! But we must also balance those times out with times of fasting. *"To EVERY thing there is a season"!*

Don't worry! I'm not going to tell you not to eat till Christmas. That would really put a damper on this festive time, wouldn't it? It can be done! Jesus, Moses and Elijah all fasted for forty days in the scriptures. By the way, the longest recorded fast is 382 days by a man in Scotland in 1974-5 and, yes, he lived a long and healthy life afterward. But that's not you! Or me. However, each of us can fast our own length of time. You already do it anyway. The first meal of the day is called "breakfast" for a reason, it 'breaks your overnight fast'. So what each of us can do is extend the length of that "overnight fast" by a number of hours. I go from 6:00 PM(ish) to 12:00 noon (ish). This is surprisingly easy AFTER the first day. I added the (ish) because if my wife offers me a donut at 11:45 AM that donut is DOOMED! Don't go nuts. We are learning what Paul said in **1 Corinthians 9:27** "Bring the body into submission."

Cleveland Reddinger

Worship: Moving From A Noun To A Verb

H. E. Phillips was a well-known gospel preacher of the 20th century. He lived and preached in Tampa, Florida, during the time I attended Florida College in the late 1960's. For many years he was the editor of a religious journal, "Searching the Scriptures."

It was during that time that he decided to have the Bible recorded on tape. Bro. Phillips hired a Shakespearian actor, Richard Lupino, to narrate the texts. Interestingly, Lupino didn't know anything about the Bible. So H.E. would explain to him the characters

and the setting and then Lupino would do an interpretative reading of it. To show how little he knew, when he came to the section about Paul, he asked Phillips, "Paul? Is he a good guy or a bad guy?" When Lupino finishing reading **Revelation chapters 4 and 5**, he abruptly left the room. When he returned his eyes were red. He said, "Mr. Phillips I have performed on stages all over the world. I have read the finest Shakespearian literature, but I've never read anything more beautiful in all my life."

Often in reading Revelation we become absorbed in the symbols and confused by the imagery and neglect to see the big picture. Without worrying about the symbols, it's clear that these two chapters are describing worship.

In **chapter 4** God is sitting on the throne. In fact, 14 times the word "throne" is used in this chapter to picture God's glory, rule, and sovereignty. He is the Almighty. He is in control. John sees a magnificent splendor of adoration expressed to the Creator.

"The twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying: 'You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created.'"
(Rev. 4:10-11)

Then in **chapter 5**, we see the Lamb of God entered the picture. He is the Redeemer. While he is the sacrificial lamb, who was slain but lives. Paradoxically, He is the prophetic fulfillment as the *"Lion of the tribe of Judah."* He possesses strength, courage and dignity. And He's in heaven, having fulfilled God's eternal plan for man's salvation. Likewise, he is honored.

Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice:

*"Worthy is the Lamb who was slain
To receive power and riches and wisdom
And strength and honor and glory and blessing!"
And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying:*

*"Blessing and honor and glory and power
Be to Him who sits on the throne,
And to the Lamb, forever and ever!"*

Then the four living creatures said, "Amen!" And the twenty-four elders fell down and worshiped Him who lives forever and ever. (Rev 5:11-14).

As I reflect on these resplendent scenes, I think how often we consider worship as a noun. A place to go. A service to attend. A time to begin; and end. On time, of course.

Yet, worship here is a verb. It denotes activity and action. It is not passive, but active. Worship is something you

do, not something that is done to you. And it is something you must do. No one else can do it for you.

You can be in a place where worship occurs, but that doesn't mean that you have worshiped.

You can only go away and say "I worshiped" when you say I honored God, not only with my presence but by my thoughts, my communion, my prayers and my praise. In my heart I have bowed down to him. We come to a worship service with very complex lives. With problems. Challenges. Issues that we face in our homes. Professions. And personal lives. Worship is the ability to take our minds off those things and really

focus on Him who is the object of our worship.

Worship is praising God.

Reverence given.

Awe felt.

Adoration shown.

Homage paid.

Glory ascribed.

Thankfulness expressed.

It is veneration conveyed to Him who made us, loved us and redeemed us.

Worship is God-ward. Not man directed.

Worship is real, not artificial.

It appeals to the spiritual, not the temporal. To the sacred, not the secular.

It is unique. Special. Distinctive.

Worship is a function of both the head and the heart. It is directed by both understanding and emotion.

Worship is personal. I must engage in it myself. And although I join with other worshipers in an assembly, I am responsible for my worship. Accountable to God. Warren Hamby was right when he wrote, "Worship isolated from involvement is a bland and meaningless exercise."

This Sunday when attending a worship service, be sure you worship. *"Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; worship the Lord in the splendor of holiness"*
(Ps. 29:2).

Ken Weliever, The Preacherman; Taken from thepreachersword.com

What Are the Pictures?

A young lad was visiting a church for the first time and checked out all the announcements and posters along the walls.

When he came to a group of pictures of men in uniform, he asked a nearby usher, "Who are all those men in the pictures?"

The usher replied, "Why those are our boys who died in the service."

Dumbfounded, the youngster asked, "Was that the morning service or the evening service?"

Let us be reminded to pray for those we support who are preaching in other areas of this country and also of the world. Remember to pray for Kyle Bennett in Boston Ma., Matt Hodge in Marshfield, Mo. and Cleveland Reddinger in El Dorado, Ks. Overseas we need to remember, Wilfredo Pelino and Jonathan Sapitula in the Philippines as well as Arao Uchaio, Francisco Vascob in Mozambique.

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

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NEWS AND NOTES:

PLEASE REMEMBER JAN
PATRICK, STEPHEN KIMKER,
STEVE AND SUZANNE WIMP,
ALMA BAUMGARTNER, AND
GEORGE ROOT.

BIBLE CLASSES

SUNDAY MORNING - FOLLOWING
THE MESSIAH - RON PECK -
TEACHER

WEDNESDAY EVENING
CHRIST IN YOU
JIM STAUFFER - TEACHER

SUNDAY SERMON:

GOD'S VIEW OF GENDER



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