

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

Ana Surface 2010

John 8:32 And
ye shall
know the
truth and the
truth shall
make you
free.

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Let Me Be Like Ezra

by Jim Stauffer

*“For Ezra had set his heart to **study** the law the law of the LORD and to **practice** it, and to **teach** His statutes and ordinances in Israel.” (Ezra 7:10)*

The attitude of Ezra is admirable and is necessary for one to achieve what God desires for each of us. His situation was unique in that he was to be instrumental in the restoration of worship in Jerusalem. There was great need for leadership among the returning remnant to reestablish God’s plan for His people to keep the Law.

There is the same great need today for leadership in the study and promulgation of the word of God in our current world. A devotion to studying His word is the first step each of us must take if we are to be like Ezra and have an influence on the society in which we live.

This attitude of studying His word leads me to learn and know what He has commanded. *“I shall give thanks to You with uprightness of heart, When I learn Your righteous judgments.” (Psalm 119:7)* Certainly I cannot do or teach others to do His will until I learn it for myself. Ezra recognized his own need as well as that of those of his nation and determined to learn what God expected of them and communicate it to his countrymen.

Ezra teaches us of the great love he had for his heavenly Father. As he and others faced the difficulties of rebuilding Jerusalem and restoring the worship to Judah his love for God was the motivating factor in his perseverance. *“By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.” (1 John 5:2–3)* Jesus says this is the first and greatest commandment that we, *...shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your*

soul and with all your mind. (Mat. 22:37) Typical of any foundational idea, we can only achieve our responsibilities to God when our love for Him is as it should be. We must accept the negative implications of the passage in **1 John 5**. If we do not keep His commandments it will be an indication of a lack of love for God.

Before Ezra could teach the people the law of God he had to study it and learn it sufficiently to practice it. God demands we not only know His will but practice it and not the ideas from any other source **(Mat. 7:21-23)**. James says we deceive ourselves when we hear what God says and then fail to practice it **(James 1:22-25)**.

Finally, when we love the Lord, study His word, learn it and practice it, we are ready to teach it to others. The author of Hebrews tells us that is indicative of our maturity **(Heb. 5:12-14)**. Jesus then commands us to go teach it to the world in order to make disciples of Christ from that effort.

If and when we have done that we will have achieved the growth of which Peter reminds us in his writing. We will have grown in the grace and knowledge of Christ and will have insured our entrance into the eternal kingdom **(2 Pet. 1:5-11; 3:18)**.

FAITHFUL IN LITTLE OR MUCH?

“He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much. Therefore, if you have not been faithful in the use of unrighteous wealth, who will entrust the true riches to you? And if you have not been faithful in the use of that which is another’s, who will give you that which is your own? No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the

other, or else he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth”

(Luke 16:10-13 NASV).

Our use of wealth must be a constant concern as we strive to serve Jesus. The successful farmer turned out to be a fool; the rich man ended up in torments. Did wealth have something to do with their destiny? There is a danger in wealth, in riches, in success. *“But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs”* **(1 Timothy 6:9-10)**. On the other hand, we can use wisely what the Lord has entrusted to us; this should always be our aim **(1 Corinthians 4:2)**. What was the aim of the unscrupulous servant? It seems that he was trying, even through dishonesty, to save his own neck. And, he was commended for his shrewdness. What are the lessons for us?

Jesus said the manager of goods that belonged to someone else acted with wisdom, with prudence. People in the world, do think about their wealth; often their actions revolve around what they have and how to get more. Jesus’ followers must do the same in regard to spiritual wealth and blessings. We must wisely use the blessings of our relationship with the Lord; soon, we will be rewarded with eternal dwellings, an everlasting tabernacle that awaits the wise and spiritual. Do we use others for our own selfish good? No. But we can set good examples before the world by using wisely what God has given us. Do others see our willingness to share our wealth? Do they see our concern for each other and for those who have fallen by the wayside? Are we trustworthy in our handling of the little things that come to us? If we are careless in using our blessings, we cannot expect greater riches. The opposite will happen: What we have will be taken away. When our focus is mammon, we have already lost sight of the true riches of heaven. Serving two masters is impossible. Every choice contains at least an implicit acceptance or denial regarding the choices made.

Our money, our wealth can be and should be blessings to us and to others; in this, we glorify God. The problem with the pursuit of the things of this life is that we lose our focus on God. Our desire for more can distort the need we have for God. When we are successful, we say: Look at what we have done; we don’t need anyone to help us. Attachment to this world detaches us from the world to come. What we have and how we use what we have has a lot to do with where

we end up when this life is over. Let us hold loosely the things that perish; let us hold tightly to our Savior. Don’t ever let go of Jesus.

Randy Harshbarger

Why So Many Churches? (4)

So far we have covered the first reason for the many churches: A lack of appreciation on the part of many, a vast majority, of the fundamental importance of Unity.

The second reason for the many churches is a lack of understanding of what Unity really IS. What does it mean to, as Peter says, to be one of *“those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ”*? **(2 Peter 1:1)** How do we do what Paul said in **1 Corinthians 1:10**, *“Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment.”*?

We must FIRST understand that he is referring to MATTERS OF FAITH when he tells us to be of the same mind and judgement. These matters are ANYWHERE GOD HAS SPOKEN. Once God has revealed his mind on any matter your right to a personal belief in that matter is at an end. For example, when God says that Jesus was raised from the dead **(Romans 6:4** and other places) I have no right to say that *“I’m a Christian but I just don’t believe in the Resurrection!”* When Jesus says in **John 8:24**, *“Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.”* I can’t come along and “soft-soap” it for poor uncle Johnny, a “Good Ole Boy” but an unbeliever from the word “Go!”

We all, me included, must fear changing the Faith to suit our fancy! It’s easier to do than we think.

Cleveland Reddinger

A Godly Man in Wicked Surroundings

Bill Hall

Elijah was a man who reached true greatness in the Lord’s service. He was always ready to go where God would send him **(1 Kings 18:1; 19:15)**; to pray whenever prayer was needed **(1 Kings 17:20, 21;**

18:36, 37), and to confront evil whenever confrontation was necessary (**1 Kings 18:17-24; 21:17-19**). He was translated without seeing death, and he, along with Moses, was chosen to appear with the Lord on the mount of transfiguration.

The remarkable thing about Elijah is that he attained this greatness while living in a wicked and hostile environment. Had he lived in Judah during the righteous reign of Hezekiah or Josiah, we might not be surprised at Elijah's attainments. But he lived instead in Israel during the wicked reign of Ahab. He was subjected to the cruel intents of Jezebel. He was under constant harassment and threat of death. He became so discouraged at one point that he asked to die, but he never denied his God.

In this wicked environment Elijah was able to influence others. The widow of Zarephath was blessed through Elijah (**1 Kings 17:8-24**). The multitudes on Mount Carmel were led to cry, "*The Lord, He is God!*" through his courageous efforts (**1 Kings 18:39**). Elisha, his successor, must have been greatly influenced by him. And even Ahab was brought to humility on one occasion, clothing himself in sackcloth as a result of Elijah's rebuke (**1 Kings 21:27-29**).

The message of Elijah is clear. You can live a godly life and influence others for good in a wicked and hostile environment. When one hears the excuses people make today, it is obvious that Elijah's message is badly needed in this generation. People excuse their failure to teach others the gospel with, "People are so prejudiced around here they just won't listen"; when the truth is, little effort has been made. If they are approached about their ungodly conduct, they explain that "You just don't know how terrible the people are that I have to work around every day." If their children go astray their explanation is, "Our children are faced with pressures that we didn't have growing up." Such statements, repeated often enough, become too many a "license" to do wrong and a salve to soothe their troubled consciences.

We must throw aside our excuses and make up our minds to do right. Elijah could serve God in wicked surroundings. And so can we.

~via Faith Builder; Macon, Georgia; Taken from The Market Street Messenger

Fully Pleasing God

And so, from the day we, heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding so as to walk in a manner worthy of the

Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God-- Colossians 1:9-10 (ESV).

As a child of God, we have placed ourselves under the obligation to walk this pathway conducting our lives in a manner that will be pleasing to God. It goes without saying that in order to do this we must strive to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (**2 Peter 2:18**). If we are going to do this, then we must diligently strive to add to our faith, moral excellence, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness and love (**2 Peter 1:6-7**). Now, in order to do this, we will have to fill our hearts with the word of God (**2 Timothy 2:15; 1 Peter 2:1-3**). Our success in walking in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing him is going to be found in whether or not we become doers of the word and not hearers only (**James 1:22-25; James 2:17-20**).

As a child of God there came a moment of time in which we made the decision to be baptized into Christ (**Galatians 3:27**). We went into the watery grave of baptism and came forth a new creature in Christ, raised to walk in newness of life (**2 Corinthians 5:17; Romans 6:4**). In our hearts, on that day we made a promise to our God that we were going to live for him, doing whatever he said must be done, always living our lives in a manner worthy of him, fully pleasing him. Have we kept our promise? Are we now keeping that promise every minute of every day? The words of **Ecclesiastes 5:4-5** sound out a tremendous warning to us: "*When you make a vow to God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed. Better is it that thou shouldest not vow. than that shouldest vow and not pay.*"

Walking in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him allows us to cry out to him knowing he will hear us and sustain us (**Psalms 3:3-5; Hebrews 4:16**). I would have all of us remember that if we fail to walk this pathway in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing him, we will have utterly and completely failed in this life and it will cost us dearly in the life to follow.

The thought occurs to me that fully pleasing the Lord, we can sing with the spirit and understanding these words: "*And when my task on earth is done, When by Thy grace the victory's won, Even death's cold wave I will not flee, Since God thro' Jordan leadeth me.*"

To God be the glory now and forever (**2 Peter 3:18**).
Charles Hicks; swabbie5256@gmail.com

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.

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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

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SUNDAY MORNING SERMON
(YOUTUBE ALSO)

THE REAL REWARD OF HEAVEN



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