

LENEXA EDIFIER

And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; Eph. 4:11,12

October 11, 2020

FROM TRUTH TO HOPE AND LOVE

"We give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and the love which you have for all the saints; because of the hope laid up for you in heaven, of which you previously heard in the word of truth, the gospel" (Colossians 1:3-5)

It is interesting to observe how the Holy Spirit guides the apostle into first saying what his true desire is for brethren he has not met, but understands hold a *like precious faith* as he.

We must begin at the end of the verses to see the process in its chronological order. These brethren first heard the word of truth, the gospel.

When the Lord came to earth from heaven as Scripture tells us, to share in the flesh and blood of His creation, He came bringing the truth (**Joh. 18:37**). The truth He brought was the gospel of salvation. He brought it in His action during His personal ministry (**John 8:32**) and in His death, burial and resurrection (**1 Cor. 15:1-4**). This message of redemption through His blood is the truth all men are in need of and this is the reference Paul makes in this text. The Colossians had received this message likely from Epaphras (**see vs. 7**).

Paul says a result of this message is a hope of eternal life in heaven with the Lord. In the Roman letter he tells us that heavenly reward is one of glory as of the glory of God and that such glory far exceeds the necessary suffering here (**Rom. 5:1,2; 8:18**). Peter says it is *.....imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away...* (**1 Pet. 1:4**). Further, the apostle advises us of the hope we have by way of the encouragement we receive from those who have gone before us as God's people (**Rom. 15:4**). This is, after all *....the hope of His calling...the riches of His inheritance in the saints...* (**Eph.1:18; 4:4**).

The other effect of the truth of the gospel the apostle mentions here is the love of the brethren. This is a piece of evidence of their redemption. Proof they have been translated from darkness to light, from the *...domain of darkness* (Satan's realm) *to the kingdom*

of His beloved Son... (**Col. 1:13,14**). Jesus taught a principle He said was a new commandment. *"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."* (**John 13:34-35**) The new portion was not to love your brethren as that was the case under Moses as well, but to love them *...even as I have loved you*.

Jesus introduced the world to a level of love that previously was understood in word but certainly not in deed. While men throughout history have died for family or country in defense of those peoples, no one had ever lived sinlessly and died for sinners simply because he loved them (**Rom. 5:8**). This brethren calls on us to love one another in a way far beyond our general acceptance of the idea. It means we view their soul as having such value that our own fleshly life is of less importance. This lends a greater understanding to such verses as **Phil. 2:3,4**, *"Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others."* This passage is juxtaposed to **verses 5-8** of the same chapter, *"Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."* Yes it does indeed say we should view our brethren in the same light the Lord did when he died for their souls. Remember, He died for their spiritual well being. That is exactly what He means in **John 13:34,35** when He says *...that you love one another, even as I have loved you...*

Now we must answer whether we have received the word of truth, the gospel as did the Colossians. If so we will love our brethren and spare no effort or expense as we both seek our eternal inheritance.

SIMON OF CYRENE

"When they led Him away, they seized a man, Simon of Cyrene, coming in from the country, and placed on him the cross to carry behind Jesus" (Luke 23:26 NASV). Jesus often said that He would take up His cross. Now His time had arrived. The Sanhedrin, led by Annas and Caiaphas, condemned Him. Pilate washed his hands of the matter. Jesus, a condemned man, walks to His death, carrying His own cross. The crowds clamored for His death. Some were laughing; some were crying. The Father was watching. Thousands of Roman crosses had cast their blighted shadows upon the empire. Now, in a back-water part of the world, one cross would stand higher and shine brighter than any before.

Condemned men were forced to carry the crossbeam; it was then fixed to an upright timber already in ground. The man to be executed might wear a sign of some kind around his neck, a declaration of guilt. That sign would be attached to the top of the cross. Ropes were sometimes used to tie the condemned to the cross; in Jesus' case, nails were used. Life could linger for several days before death finally came from exposure, asphyxia, or loss of blood. Can we imagine the pain Jesus experienced after being scourged? The cross was now too heavy for Jesus to carry. Roman citizens were too good to carry this instrument of shame. What to do? Simon of Cyrene (north Africa) is conscripted (laid hold of), becoming part of that eventful day. Many speculate (with good cause?) that because Simon and his two sons are mentioned by name (a Rufus is mentioned in **Romans 16:13**), that he was well known to some in the NT, and possibly Mark knew him personally. Simon, a common Jewish name, was in Jerusalem for the Passover. Now, he would carry his own cross; and he would carry Jesus' cross. Was Simon glad to identify with Jesus and to carry the shame and alienation of the cross? Or, was he simply there on that day along with many others watching as the horrors of crucifixion were carried out?

The call to discipleship involves a cross, Jesus' cross and our own. Luke speaks of this often. For three years Jesus had invited all who would come to follow Him to take up their crosses, and walk the road to pain, humility, and death. Death to self, to sin, to anything that prevents the advent of kingdom into one's heart are the demands of the cross. Do we see in Simon someone who is now following Jesus, who seeks true holiness, and now wants to serve others, even to the point of death? Or, do we see too much?

Could Simon ever dream that he would play such a role on that great day; or, that now 2000 years later, we would be talking about him? We don't know much about Simon; the same can be said about most of us. We live and toil in a big, wide world. Most people don't know us, or even care to know. That's ok. We must remember that Jesus died on a cross to give us life. And He died for Simon. Have you ever wondered if Simon talked to his boys, Alexander and Rufus, about what happened that day? Have we talked to our children about what happened that day?

Randy Harshbarger

Reaching Forward

Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus (Philippians 3:13-14).

As I think about forgetting the past and reaching forward to what lies ahead, my mind races back over the years to an event recorded in the fourteenth chapter of Exodus. It is a most trying time for Israel--they have departed Egypt but now they are faced with a most difficult task, crossing the Red Sea--they have no way to cross it--there is no way around it and the Egyptian army is coming up behind them. They feel doomed and begin to complain as they let the past control them. Moses is at a loss not knowing what to do. He goes to God and God's message is: *"Tell my people to go forward."* My friends that should be an inspiring message for you and I today.

As we walk this pathway of life we will be faced with many obstacles that must be overcome. Fears and burdens that trouble our hearts, disappointments, sorrows and temptations lie in front of us, on each side and yes, even behind us and coming up on us is our adversary, the devil (**1 Peter 5:8**). We must understand that regardless of the circumstances that surround us, God's message for us is "forget the past, reach forward to what lies ahead."

Pressing on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus should be the supreme aim of our lives. We must let nothing stop our forward movement toward that prize. We must run this race of life as if there were blinders on our eyes so as to not let any encumbrance or temptation cause

us to swerve to the right or left and lose that prize. It will not be easy to always go forward but with our eyes focused on the author and finisher of our faith, we will succeed (**Hebrews 12:1-2; Col. 3:1-2**).

Time is swiftly passing for each one of us and our eternal destiny lies directly in front of us. We must be careful that we do not find ourselves so attached to the things of this world so that they become a stumbling block causing our faith to falter (**1 John 2:15-17; James 4:4; Luke 12:15**). As I write these words today, I tell you that the thought of one day receiving that incorruptible crown of righteousness which the Lord will give to me if I diligently reach forth to that inheritance that fadeth not away is the source of strength, courage, comfort and peace that makes each passing day on this earth bearable (**James 1:12; 2 Timothy 4:8; 1 Peter 1:4**). How about you? To God be the glory forever and ever!

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“You Have To Pick Your Battles”

We hear an expression fairly often these days: “You have to pick your battles.” That concept is applied in politics, in business matters, in personal relationship situations, etc. While there may be some fair applications in those realms, we are seriously concerned when we hear folks saying this about religious issues. Even some of our own brethren are picking up this faulty notion.

The expression ‘pick your battles’ suggests that on some things you have to compromise. Perhaps it’s not what you really want or think is right and best, but sometimes you just have to let the other fella have his way. What about this idea?

First, if it is a doctrinal matter, there is no ‘picking’ for us to do. God has already revealed the truth on the subject and faithful Christians cannot choose to ignore a situation where others are violating His will. If it is an issue of truth and righteousness, we must follow the pattern set by the apostle Paul. When false teachers attempted to push their error, Paul said *“we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you”* (**Galatians 2:5**). We ought to do likewise – the battle is engaged already – there is no ‘picking’ for us to do.

When the issue is not doctrinal, but rather an opinion or judgment matter, there’s no ‘picking of battles’ here either -- because there should be no battle at all! In this sort of scenario we ought to *“be subject one to one to another, and be clothed with humility”* (**1 Peter 5:5**). So many church problems could be avoided if all had this attitude.

“You have to pick your battles”? – no, not in service to God. There is no place for that approach here. Think!

by Greg Gwin

So What’s The Solution?

For the past few weeks I’ve been plainly pointing out the problems that have led us to the sad situation we find ourselves in today with hundreds of different churches when we began with but one. It does precious little good, however, to point out a problem without offering a solution. This I begin to do now.

Since it is not the Bible which divides us, as we’ve seen; and since Jesus Himself prayed for unity among his followers, **John 17:20-23**; and also, since we all already believe the Bible to be the Word of God which must be obeyed, **Luke 6:46**; does it not make sense that the Bible can remove the problems we have concerning Unity and Fellowship? Certainly seems so to me! Given that Paul commanded us to speak the same things (spiritually) then we must also acknowledge two more things are true:

1. We must be able to understand the Bible. This Paul solves in **Ephesians 3:3f** *“how that by revelation was made known unto me the mystery, as I wrote before in few words, whereby, when ye read, ye can perceive my understanding in the mystery of Christ”*.
2. We can understand the Bible ALIKE! If I ask you “How much is 2 plus 2?” and you answer 4 then you have properly understood addition. If you give any other answer then you do not have a “different understanding” of addition, you MISUNDERSTAND addition. The same is true of scripture. **1 Corinthians 14:33** says *“for God is not a God of confusion”*. The Holy Spirit is the author of scripture and he is not going to lead you to one doctrine and me to a completely opposite doctrine. That is confusion and not of God! We both must yield to scripture!

Cleveland Reddinger

God made man upright...

"Truly, this only I have found: That God made man upright, but they have sought out many schemes" (Ecclesiastes 7:29).

From the beginning people have turned against God in disobedience. Eve at the fruit that God had forbidden and when she gave it to Adam, he ate it too.

At the end of the creation account God saw that all He had made was *very good* (**Genesis 1:31**). Truly, God made people good and righteous. However, our sins have separated us from God. Everyone of us is in need of salvation. You need the forgiveness of sins. I need the same forgiveness.

Let us turn from our evil plans and schemes and turn to God's scheme of redemption.

Don Bunting

NEWS AND NOTES

Sick in need of prayers:

JAN PATRICK, ALMA BAUMGARTNER, TRUDY MULLEN, RENE RATLIFF, DENESE GORING, RODNEY BLOUNT, TRACY RICHARDSON, DAISY DARNALL, BROOKLYN BOYER, STEVE WIMP, JESSIE GIBSON, PAT GAINES AND KAREN MOORE, THE SISTER OF RON PECK. ALSO PLEASE REMEMBER BETH ARMSTRONG DURING HER GRIEF OVER THE DEATH OF HER UNCLE.

SUNDAY BIBLE CLASS - **BOOK OF DANIEL** - **BILL MILLER**

WEDNESDAY BIBLE CLASS - **THE PARABLES** - **BY MULTIPLE TEACHERS** (BOTH CLASSES OFFERED ON ZOOM)

SUNDAY SERMON: GOD'S PROVIDENTIAL PURPOSE (WHERE DO YOU FIT?)

Evangelist and Editor Jim Stauffer

Elders:

Ron Peck and Jim Stauffer

Deacons:

Bill Miller

Brandon Jimison

Joe Hurd

"Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons:"

(Philippians 1:1)

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear the gospel - **Rom. 10:17**

Believe in Jesus Christ - **Heb. 11:6**

Repent of sins - **Acts 17:30**

Confess Christ as Lord - **Rom. 10:9,10**

Baptism for remission of sins - **Acts 2:38**

"Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, so that you will be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life." (Revelation 2:10)

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.*

ADDRESS AND HOURS OF WORSHIP

7845 Cottonwood Dr. Lenexa, Kansas,
66216

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/ Worship

Visitors welcome

We conduct in home Bible Studies

We offer Correspondence Courses

Check out the following websites:

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lenexachurchofchrist.org