

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.

September
13
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Our Current Distress

by Gary Fisher

Americans value freedom. In many ways our freedoms are a blessing and we have benefited by them. Scripture endorses the value of freedom. Paul encouraged slaves who could be free to take advantage of that opportunity (**1 Corinthians 7:21**). Peter said to *“act as free men”*, but then added not to *“use your freedom as a covering for evil, but use it as bondslaves of God”* (**1 Peter 2:16**). *“Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty”* (**2 Corinthians 3:17**). Jesus frees us from sin, death, the law, addictions.

Our freedom is limited. We are servants of God. As servants, we submit to Him. When there is a conflict, we submit to God over man (**Acts 5:29**). The fact that we serve God makes us very different, like aliens from another planet, and this causes us to be slandered (**1 Peter 2:11-12**). The focus of this post is **1 Peter 2:12**: *“Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation.”* What does Peter mean by excellent behavior that will cause the non-Christians to end up glorifying God? Consider **1 Peter 2:13-3:12**. He tells us to *“submit yourselves for the Lord’s sake to every human institution”* (**1 Peter 2:13**). He subdivides that ... submission to kings and governors; servants to masters, even the ornery ones; wives to husbands, even the unbelieving ones. He sums up: *“All of you be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kind-hearted and humble in spirit; not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead”* (**1 Peter 3:8-9**). Imagine the challenge of a Christian slave submitting to an unreasonable master, or a Christian wife to a pagan husband. But remember, Jesus Himself submitted to flagrant injustice (**1 Peter 2:21-25**).

Our submission to the authorities glorifies God. What does the world see in us? Stubbornness when it comes to matters of faith, honesty, integrity, boldness to speak the Word. But we are model citizens, model employees, model spouses in all other ways. We do not insist on our rights. We submit. So they realize that in the areas where we cannot submit, it is because of our commitment to obey God. But aside from this, we are meekly compliant.

Freedom is intoxicating. It grates on us to surrender freedom we think we have the right to. But we possess no inalienable rights in this situation. We are servants of Christ: *“Whoever forces you to go one mile, go with him two”* (**Matthew 5:41**). I remember when the seatbelt law came into effect. I didn’t like it, and I wasn’t alone in that. I chose not to wear a seatbelt until required by law. That wasn’t too smart, I understand, but I am illogically rebellious at times. When the government required it, I began to wear it for conscience sake. I was raised to respect authority, and I believe that God wants me to.

Some have balked at wearing masks at government mandate. We are to obey what the governor says whether we think he has the right to say it or not. We are to obey whether we like it or not, think it wise or not. **If the government doesn’t mandate masks in our assemblies but the church leaders do, we should submit, because God asks us to submit to them, too (Hebrews 13:17). Or if my wearing a mask will simply enable my brother to feel more comfortable in worship, I should submit (1 Peter 5:5; Galatians 5:13). (emp. mine Jcs.)**

So we don’t submit to anything that is against God’s Word. For example, we assemble to worship regardless of governmental decree. But we do submit to anything that does not lead us to violate Scripture, even if we

detest it. For example, wearing masks. What a testimony to the world when we show that we will risk life and limb to obey God. But we will readily give up “our rights” to submit to governmental decrees or societal norms (**1 Corinthians 9:19-23**) that do not make us disobey the Lord.

May God give us more humility.

Commentary on Our Distress

Jim Stauffer

First, I confess I harvested the article by bro. Fisher from Facebook and it had no title. I have assigned it a title to try to guide the reader’s mind to the subject under consideration.

It could be stated accurately Gary’s article is more about appropriate behavior of the Lord’s disciples than the actual subject of our response to Covid-19 governmental guidelines.

The fact is our response to governmental guidelines is crucial to our faithful adherence to the attitude Jesus demands of us as we walk in His steps (**1 Pet. 2:21-24**).

What seems to be missing among a few brethren is what Jesus actually stood for as He set the example for our lives. Jesus resisted Satan and his advances, not the Roman government specifically. That, brethren, needs to be the center of our thoughts on this subject and any other. What can a man do that is more irreverent than slapping the Son of God in the face, literally? Yet Jesus’ concern was greater for the hearts of the Jews who were crying crucify Him than over how He was being mistreated by pagan men responding to their evil leaders.

There are two major concerns I have about the current issues we face and neither of them involve wearing a mask at the insistence of either governmental leaders or leaders in the church. First we must answer for ourselves when **Acts 5:29** comes into play relative to our actions. Peter and John were being ordered to desist preaching Jesus, which is exactly what the Lord expects of each one of us. This provides for us a clear violation of God’s commands by the local authorities. When that occurs we must take a similar stand.

Where we make our greatest mistake is thinking a violation of our rights as a citizen of the United States of America is equal to a violation of our rights as a citizen in the Kingdom of God. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Please read the biblical support bro. Fisher gives us for clarification of this point.

Let us all be certain of our position on this subject. When the government decides we cannot comply with the commands of Scripture, we will stand our ground. When they pass or enact laws that deny our ability to do those things God has taught us in order to sustain our faith, we will stand our ground. But telling us to wear masks does not do that. It may be your opinion that singing is somehow diminished as an act of worship if you have a mask, but that is just that, your opinion. The ability to make melody in our hearts can be as readily accomplished with or without a mask. Now, do the voices sound as good to the human ear? Of course not, but that is not how God measures our worship and we all know that. Otherwise the brother who cannot carry a tune would not be allowed to sing and make melody in his heart to the Lord. No, what is being affected is your personal right and privilege that you have enjoyed for your lifetime.

The Lord has much greater concern for your continued faithful worship and service than He does for what the government does to you. *“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**)

ZACCHEUS

“He entered Jericho and was passing through. And there was a man called by the name of Zaccheus; he was a chief tax collector and he was rich. Zaccheus was trying to see who Jesus was, and was unable because of the crowd, for he was small in stature. So, he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree in order to see Him, for He was about to pass through that way. When Jesus came to the place, He looked up and said to him, Zaccheus, hurry and come down, for today I must stay at your house. And he hurried and came down and received Him gladly. When they saw it, they all began to grumble, saying, He has gone to be the guest of a man who is a sinner. Zaccheus stopped and said to the Lord, Behold, Lord, half of my possessions I will give to the poor, and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will give back four times as much. And Jesus said to him, Today, salvation has come to this house, because he, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.” (**Luke 19:1-10 NASV**).

Jesus said it was hard for rich people to enter into the kingdom (**Luke 18:24**). Yet, we can be thankful that God can, and does, bring wealthy people into the kingdom. Zaccheus was an unlikely candidate for the kingdom from many standpoints; he was wealthy, he worked for the Roman government; he even had doubts about his past life. Now, Jesus goes home with him. The borders of the kingdom are broad.

Zaccheus was interested in seeing Jesus; he climbed a tree to get a closer look. Jesus took the initiative, telling Zaccheus to get down and then they would go home together. This wasn't the first time Jesus ate with tax collectors (**Luke 5:27**). *"I must" stay at your house*. It was a *necessity* for Jesus to go home with Zaccheus. And why wouldn't Jesus do that? He came to seek and save the lost; even wealthy tax collectors were not beyond the pale of heaven's concern. Zaccheus' neighbors didn't like what was happening; to them, he was a sinner. Zaccheus realized the possibility that maybe he needed to right any wrongs committed in his tax work. He would give half of his goods (wealth) to the poor. He would repay to the max anyone he had defrauded. The Law of Moses said to add 20% for restitution (**Leviticus 5:16**). Zaccheus goes beyond that amount. True repentance flows from a changed heart; it also shows itself in concrete actions. Implicit in this episode is the need to have faith in Jesus Christ. What and how much did Zaccheus know about Jesus? Early in **Luke (3:8)**, John the Baptist told those who would come to Jesus that they must show the fruits of repentance. Isn't that what Zaccheus was doing? Isn't he acting with faith in Jesus? Jesus said: *Today, salvation, has come to this house*. If Zaccheus was a son of Abraham, then he was a person of faith. It is wonderful that salvation came to Zaccheus and his house; in fact, salvation was coming to all those who lived in Jericho. Even more, it is wonderful that salvation comes to your house and to my house. But do we really want Jesus to come home with us? Will we take the riches out of our lives so we can climb a tree to see Jesus?

Randy Harshbarger

Why So Many Churches? The Ego Problem

With a title like the one above you might be tempted to think I was going to **3 John 9f** and bring up Diotrephes, who *"loved to have the pre-eminence among them"*, and you'd be partially right! The church has been plagued by men who use religion as their own personal ego trip since the beginning and they are a constant

"Pain in the Neck". However, good, honest and humble men can usually spot a Diotrephes in short order and deal with him by adding some starch to their backbone.

No, what I am talking about is a much more insidious, and therefore much more dangerous, expression of ego. What I am talking about is "ego on another's behalf". It goes like this: "I hear what you're saying, preacher, and it sure looks like that's what the Bible says. But my Mother... or my Grandfather... or my family all believe Doctrine X." You're applying your ego to your ancestors! You aren't saying that YOU couldn't make a mistake, after all- that would be arrogant! But you can't bring yourself to admit that THEY COULD! After all, they were humble, studious, devout and sincere which are all good qualities. But what about another humble, studious, devout and sincere person who believes differently? Are you saying THEY should change because YOUR family was right? THERE'S your EGO PROBLEM!

An old preacher told his son, "I want you to obey my word, but if you ever find out that I am telling you something different from what Jesus says I want you to disobey me and obey Jesus, 'cause He'll never lead you wrong!" If your family was all that you say, and I'm not saying otherwise, wouldn't this be their attitude and desire for you?

Cleveland Reddinger

Wash Your Face

When you see a dirty face in the mirror, you wash your face, not the mirror. Likewise when we see error in our lives portrayed by truth revealed in the Bible, let us simply clean up our lives and quit criticizing the Bible. What do you think of a man who breaks a mirror because he doesn't like what he sees? Then what do you think of one who criticizes the truth that simply reveals the inner man that we can't see with the physical eye?

by Leslie Diestelkamp

God and Man

Remember that God sees the whole picture. He sees all the past; He sees all the present; and He has the power to see all the future. He can see the end from the beginning, and He knows the destiny of every person and the solution to every problem. He loves us and is always available to us, but He will force neither Himself nor His will upon us. As long as we live, we are allowed to choose. He is concerned about our true welfare and happiness - here and hereafter. With Him on our side every thing will turn out well (Romans 8:28,31); but if He must be against us, nothing will turn out right.

Bill Crews

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

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DANIEL - BILL MILLER

WEDNESDAY BIBLE CLASS - STUDY
OF WORSHIP - JIM STAUFFER
(BOTH CLASSES OFFERED ON ZOOM)

SUNDAY MORNING SERMON
(YOUTUBE ALSO)
GOD SETS THE STANDARD



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