

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.

January

24

2021

ACCEPTING SCRIPTURE AS INTENDED

Jim Stauffer

"All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work."

(2 Timothy 3:16–17)

Let us define Scripture as to its origin and therefore its value.

First we reverence its source. It is "God breathed". Therefore, it is spoken to us by whomever as a prophet of God, that is it originated with God. It is His message to us.

Moses defined a prophet for us, *"I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. 'It shall come about that whoever will not listen to My words which he shall speak in My name, I Myself will require it of him.'"*

(Deuteronomy 18:18–19) What we know is a prophet is a man selected by God to speak His (God's) message to mankind as a go-between if you will for God and man.

Jesus then qualifies as such a prophet. Notice how He words His remarks in **John 12:48-50**. He says God has told Him, *what to say and what to speak*. Then He says, *...therefore the things I speak, I speak as just as the Father has told me*. He is saying God gave Him a message, *what to say*, and the exact words to use, *I speak just as the Father has told me*. Another incident is His prayer in **John 17**. Notice **vs. 8**, *the words which you gave me*. (Words) and **vs 14**, *have given them your word* (Message)

Jesus teaches us what Peter tells us in **2 Pet. 1:20,21**, that God, by way of the Holy Spirit has breathed the words of Scripture. We need to revere them by our obedience. **Cf. 1 Cor. 2:10-13**

Another Article about 'Virtual' Meetings

"So then, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another." **1 Corinthians 11:33**

Our verse today, found in instructions about the Lord's Supper, reminds us of the value of worshipping together. That is not a new thought. In the Psalms we find that concept repeated often. For instance: **Psa.**

34:3 *"O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together."* **Psa. 122:1** *"I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the Lord.'"*

Together — you and me. That spells fellowship. That is the foundation of unity. That is team work. That is a church. Sounds simple. Basic concepts. Nothing too new here. However, there is coming a new wrinkle. The pandemic has changed so much. Books are being published about the post-covid church, and the arising virtual church.

Some national health experts are declaring that society ought never to shake hands again. Many prominent religious leaders are declaring that as much as 30% of the church will never again gather in a church building. So, the virtual church becomes a reality. Worshipping from home becomes the new way of doing things. And, there is a great appeal to that. One doesn't have to get up early, get cleaned up and drive down to the building. You can roll out of bed in your jammies, with bed hair, have a cup of coffee and just worship away. How easy. How convenient. How wonderful this is.

Out of this pandemic, look for many church buildings to be sold. Why have all that real estate when the virtual church is the new wave. Just a camera, a few lights and a means to broadcast and worship comes to you. There will be a rise of production teams rather than preachers. More will know about live streaming than the living word of God. Virtual will be the way the future goes.

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Now, What's My Take On All Of This?

First, we must not get too comfortable with virtual. For now, it may be what we have to do, but not forever. We need to be reminding folks that we need them back in the church building. Staying at home may be easy, comfortable and what they like, but it's not the N.T. pattern. Our verse today states, "*when you come together.*" We need to be together. We need to see each other's faces. We need to hear each other's voices. And, Zoom isn't the answer. The answer is to get up and get down to the church house when you can.

Second, convenient has never been in God's vocabulary. Do you think it was convenient for Noah to build the ark? How about Moses going to Pharaoh? How about wandering through the wilderness? And, the cross? Convenient? Paul's travels? Sometimes convenient can be just one step away from being lazy. We already worship conveniently. We gather in church buildings that are cooled in the summer and heated in the winter. The pews are padded. There are bathrooms everywhere. There are lights, speakers, powerpoint, song books. I'd say that we already have this convenient thing down pretty good.

Third, there is a mighty temptation to skip around when worshipping virtually. Church is singing a song you don't like. Go somewhere else for a few moments. Don't like the prayer, then fast forward. Hit the high points of the sermon—not the whole thing. And, what we have done is really gutted worship. It's so easy. Can't fast forward through a song when we are in the church building. Maybe that's a good thing. Maybe I just need that song. Can't skip a prayer while in the church building. Good. I need to hear others pray. And, in the church building, I have to listen to the whole sermon. The whole thing—from beginning to end. And, maybe, just maybe, I need to hear the whole thing.

Fourth, the virtual church leaves the impression that once I have "done church," I'm done. I watched. I sang. I prayed. I'm done. Now on to other things. But worship isn't the end of my responsibilities as a Christian. There is much more that God expects than a Sunday worship. Sitting in the church building reminds me of that. I see others and I'm reminded that I need to pray for that family. I need to send a card to that person. I need to connect with that one. Family means obligations and responsibilities. In the virtual church, it's just me and my tablet. Isolated. Unplugged. And, soon to be indifferent.

Across the country, school teachers are seeing that virtual education is ok, but it's not as good as in the classroom. The need to see, hear and interact with

others is important. The same is true of our Bible classes and our worship. Bible class is more than just imparting the information, there is the interaction, the connections, the help we receive from others.

We know that in other relationships in life, virtual doesn't work. Can you image a virtual marriage. Here is a couple and they do not even live in the same state, yet, virtually they are married. No. How about a virtual family? No. A virtual job? No. A virtual vacation? Forget it. I have watched virtual concerts. Not the same. Not even close. A virtual church? A virtual preacher? A virtual membership? Forget it. Don't go there.

Some will. Some will see nothing wrong with being a member of VC (virtual church). Instead of a street address, there will be a website address given. I wonder how a virtual church practices discipline? Most modern churches never do. But if they did, what would they do? Defriend someone? Take away a password? How will Paul's words in **1 Cor 5**, "*Not even to eat with such a one,*" work virtually?

The modern church always chases after the newest fads. Virtual church is the newest. And, in the end, I suppose they hope to go to Heaven. I wonder if folks in a virtual church would be satisfied with a virtual Heaven? Not me. Give me the real thing!

Come together—that's what disciples did. That's what we must do.

by Roger Shouse

THE BEACON - Electronic Edition - 1/19/21

FREEDOM FROM PHARISEEISM

Ken Green

"He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt: 'Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.' — Luke 18:9-10, NIV

You probably know the story. If not you should read the rest of it in your Bible. It is extremely applicable in our time and in all times. Phariseeism was not restricted to the first century.

Christianity in all its forms has become intensely unpopular in our culture. This is not because of Jesus. Jesus was very popular except among the Pharisees and other religious leaders. "*The common people heard him gladly*" (**Mark 12:27**). And it's not because of the Bible.

It is partly because the world will always focus on the very worst examples of those who wear the Name and ignore those who truly strive to follow and emulate Christ. But, it is also that there is a tendency to turn the Way of Christ into a private club religion. And Jesus' parable is about this exact condition.

How can we guard against this? Here are five things that will assist us in this:

1. Refuse to bind others with man-made rules. Binding rules beyond God's rules always hurts more people than it helps. Any rules pursued as a way to gain merit with God or salvation are wasted effort and sure to fail. The Pharisee was smug with his religious system; oblivious to God's rejection.
2. Reject externals as a spiritual yardstick. The Pharisee judged a fellow sinner to make himself look better, but he actually distanced himself from God.
3. Review your walk or your relationship with God and beware of the dangers of form without function. We may fool others with external appearances, but God knows our hearts.
4. Return to the basics of examination and confession. In a world that abhors personal responsibility, God welcomes those who know themselves as sinners and entrust themselves to God's grace and mercy.
5. Renew your pursuit of personal humility. Humility isn't a look or appearance. It is action. Humility chooses Christ's way over our own way. Humility says to God, "Your will be done, O Lord, not mine."

The Pharisee in Jesus' parable rejected each of these wise decisions; the tax-collector practiced them. Doing this will help us go "down to our house justified" when we leave the place of public prayer.

THE TESTIMONY OF SCRIPTURE

"You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me" (John 5:39 NASV). Throughout John's gospel, Jesus made many staggering claims—claims that immediately placed Him in opposition to the Jewish authorities. When He said, "God is my Father," the Jews became more incensed; their desire was to kill Him. If Jesus' claim was true, then Jesus was claiming to be

God. Did Jesus have the right to make such claims? Could He substantiate these claims? How does Jesus answer His critics?

Jesus said He did not bear witness of Himself; doing so would invalidate His claims. Who did bear witness to His identity and work? The Father who sent Me bears witness of Me; I am acting in accordance with the will and desires of My Father. How was the Father doing this? What channels or methods did the Father use to help people truly know that Jesus was His Son?

John the Baptist was a witness to Jesus Christ (**John 5:33-35**). John was not the true light; he did turn some people to the Light of the world. While John was a human witness, still his message was designed for salvation. Next, the works of Jesus provided true testimony as to the validity of His work and identity. This is the purpose of John's gospel (**John 20:30-31**). The signs, wonders, and miracles of Jesus went beyond John's testimony; the power of God in validating the gospel message extended far beyond the time of John and Jesus. But Jesus' works were the works of His Father; this made the works of Jesus special.

Then there is the witness of scripture. *"You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me."* Even though the Jews had not seen God or heard His voice (**John 5:37**), the implication was that still, they had heard from God. How? Through scripture that spoke of the Son. The Jews claimed great attachment to the Scriptures. They studied, read, and regularly heard God's word read in their worship services. What were they reading and studying? Jesus said: You are reading about Me! You want eternal life? That is why I am here; will you believe?

Just knowing God's word doesn't necessarily mean we will have faith in God's word. Obeying the Lord involves the mind; it also involves the will. We must have the desire to act upon God's word; we must show by our lives that we truly accept, believe, and will act on what Jesus says. The Jews had the testimony of the OT; but they refused to act on it. What about you and me? What do we have? We have the full revelation of God. He speaks to us in these last days through His Son (**Hebrews 1:1-2**). We have the clear witness of the written word. Still, even though we have the word, the word doesn't automatically dwell in us. The Jews were willing to search the Scriptures; they were unwilling to accept Jesus. What about you and me? Oh, yes, I want Jesus. Now, where did I put my Bible?

Randy Harshbarger

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

Deacons:

Bill Miller

Brandon Jamison

Joe Hurd

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Check out the following websites:

facebook.com/LenexaChurchofChrist

lenexachurchofchrist.org

News and Notes:

Alma Baumgartner, Jan Patrick, Trudy Mullen, Denese Goring, and Brooklyn Boyer.

Tracy Richardson's surgery was successful she now recuperates at home

Pat Gaines; Surgery improved issues in his spine.

He now will attempt to recuperate and see what his capability is. Covid – 19 – L.A. Stauffer - Aaron Hurd Family

Sunday Morning Bible Class - Messianic Pathway - OT to NT - Jim Stauffer

Wednesday Evening Bible Class - Home and Family - Ron Peck

Sunday Morning Sermon - An Appropriate Response



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