

Sermon Outlines #1

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If So Be #1 - That We Not Be Found Naked

Series Subject: Life is full of possibilities. Some of these possibilities will become reality if we choose. Having a enjoyable and profitable life just depends on choosing the right possibilities. The word of God can help us choose. In the King James Version of the Bible many of those choices begin with the words “If so be”. In the next five lessons we are going to examine the choices that will either make those possibilities a reality or prevent them from happening.

Text: 2 Corinthians 5:1-11

Introduction: Somehow winding up in public with no clothes on is one of the most embarrassing nightmare any of us has ever had. It is also one of the greatest fears of people with Alzheimer's and other similar brain disorders. Yet, when it comes to spiritual nakedness, we often seem to be unconcerned. People openly declare that they have no church affiliation, little or no faith, and are not even sure that God or heaven exist. In our text, Paul shows us the joys of being spiritually clothed and the dangers of spiritual nakedness.

I. Mortality vs. Life.

A. Going about physically naked can bring death, i.e., freezing, cancer, etc.

B. Spiritual nakedness will bring spiritual death (Revelation 3:15-19).

II. A sample of our future clothing vs. nakedness.

A. The clothes make the man may not be true physically but it is spiritually.

B. The earnest of the Spirit clothes us here (1 John 3:14-24).

III. Faith vs. sight.

A. True faith is not a case of the emperor's new clothes.

B. The clothing of faith can be seen (James 2:14-26).

IV. Acceptance vs. rejection.

A. Going out in public without clothes is not acceptable.

B. Spiritual nakedness will cause us to be rejected by God (Ephesians 1:3-14; Revelation 6:15).

Conclusion: Knowing the embarrassment and fear of appearing unclothed in public, we make sure we are properly dressed before we leave our house. Paul says that knowing the terror of the Lord we persuade people to pay the same attention to their spiritual clothing. Don't go spiritually naked. Obey and receive that sample of the eternal spiritual clothing promised to those that belong to Christ.

If So Be #2 - That We Are Taught By Christ

Series Subject: Life is full of possibilities. Some of these possibilities will become reality if we choose. Having a enjoyable and profitable life just depends on choosing the right possibilities. The word of God can help us choose. In the King James Version of the Bible those choices begin with the words “If so be”. In this lesson we will look at the possibilities opened if we allow ourselves to be taught by Jesus.

Text: Ephesians 4:17-32

Introduction: There is no teaching like that of Jesus. Those who heard him when he walked this earth were astonished at his doctrine (Matthew 7:28,22:33; Mark 1:22,11:18; Luke 4:32). It has power and brings about major changes in those who are taught by him.

- I. It brings light to our lives (Matthew 4:12-17).
 - A. The light lets us see our lives as they are (John 3:16-21).
 - B. The light lets us see the best path to walk (Ephesians 5:6-16).
- II. It renews the spirit of our mind.
 - A. It recharges our spiritual batteries (Psalms 51:10-13).
 - B. It transforms us (Romans 12:1-2).
- III. It leaves no place for the devil.
 - A. Satan doesn't give up just because we are Christians (1 Peter 5:8-11).
 - B. We can not leave our lives empty (Luke 11:23-26).
- IV. It makes our speech edifying and kind.
 - A. Seek those things that edify (Romans 14:10-23).
 - B. That which is right does not necessarily edify (1 Corinthians 10:23-33).

Conclusion: Only the teaching of Christ can bring light to our lives, recharge our spiritual batteries to keep it shining, fill our lives so that the devil can not gain a foot hold, and make our word worth the listening. Doesn't that sound like a possibility that you would like to make a reality in your life? It can be if you hear and are taught by Christ, if you obey from the heart the word that he teaches.

If So Be #3 - That The Spirit of God Dwell In You

Series Subject: Life is full of possibilities. Some of these possibilities will become reality if we choose. Having a enjoyable and profitable life just depends on choosing the right possibilities. The word of God can help us choose. In the King James Version of the Bible many of those choices begin with the words “If so be”.

Text: Romans 8:1-9

Introduction: The third lesson of our series deals with the possibilities presented by allowing God to live within us. In fact, Paul says that if we do not have the Spirit of Christ, we are none of his. Therefore, we can see the importance of the Spirit dwelling within us.

- I. God gives each of his new children a measure of his Spirit (Acts 2:38-39).
 - A. We know we are in him by His loving Spirit (1 John 4:7-13).
 - B. That Spirit can grow in his children (1 Corinthians 2:4-16).
 - C. That Spirit can be quenched (1 Thessalonian 5:11-24).
- II. Walking in the Spirit produces fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:13-26).
 - A. Follow after things that edify (Romans 14:17-19).
 - B. Show lowliness, meekness, with long suffering, and forbearance in love (Ephesians 4:1-3).
 - C. Worship God in spirit and in truth (John 4:21-24).

Conclusion: How the spirit dwells in us and grows I have saved till last because it is the most simple of all things to explain. Peter says, “For for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.” (1 Peter 4:6). As we have already noted in Acts 2:38-39, we received the Spirit when we received the gospel. Not that they are the same, but accepting one accepts the other. He also says “As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby” (1 Peter 2:2). The growth produced by the word is not growth of body. Therefore, it must be growth of the Spirit. “What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.” (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). Are you glorifying God in your body by allowing His Spirit to dwell in you by obedience to the gospel?

If So Be #4 - That We Suffer With Christ

Introduction: Life is full of possibilities. Some of these possibilities will become reality if we choose. Having a enjoyable and profitable life just depends on choosing the right possibilities. The word of God can help us choose. In the King James Version of the Bible those choices begin with the words “If so be”. In the fourth lesson of our series we are going to look at the possibilities presented by suffering. Though none of us want to suffer, suffering is not always a bad thing as we shall see. It can be both edifying and evidence of our obedience to Christ.

Text: Romans 8:16-25

- I. It is a witness of the Spirit that we are heirs of God (Philippians 1:27-30).
 - A. All that will live Godly shall suffer persecution (2 Timothy 3:10-12).
 - B. Rejoice that you are partakers of Christ's suffering (1 Peter 4:12-19).
- II. Suffering brings experience, patience, and hope (Romans 5:1-5).
 - A. Experience shows us we can depend on God (2 Timothy 4:16-18).
 - B. Patience helps us in living and teaching (2 Thessalonians 3:1-5; 1 Thessalonians 5:14-15).
 - C. Hope comes as a result of our knowledge that the Lord is over all (Ephesians 1:15-23).

Conclusion: Suffering with Christ is to be expected, but it need not be a handicap. In fact, it can be a blessing. As we have seen, suffering and tribulation are not unique to Christians, but it is useful only as a Christian.

If So Be #5 - You Have Tasted That The Lord Is Gracious

Series Subject: Life is full of possibilities. Some of these possibilities will become reality if we choose. Having a enjoyable and profitable life just depends on choosing the right possibilities. The word of God can help us choose. In the King James Version of the Bible many of those choices begin with the words “If so be”. This fifth lesson deals with the possibilities presented by experiencing the graciousness of our Lord.

Text: 1 Peter 2:1-12

- I. The love mercy and grace of God was made known to save sinners (Ephesians 2:4-10).
 - A. It is not because of our righteousness works (Titus 3:3-8).
 - B. Christ died for the ungodly (Romans 5:6-21).
 - C. The works of the Law are excluded (Romans 3:19-30).
- II. His grace teaches us to deny ungodliness (Titus 2:11-14).
 - A. His grace establishes the law of faith (Romans 3:31).
 - B. Shall we continue in sin? (Romans 6:1-18).
 - C. We are set apart and saved by baptism (Ephesians 5:25-27; 1 Peter 3:21).

Conclusion: Have you tasted the grace of God? Don't turn back. If you do there is nothing I or anyone else can say to bring you back to Christ. You have know the grace of God. You have received his salvation. You have known his word. You will have to bring yourself back because no one else can (Hebrews 6:4-12). Paul was not saying that you could not repent under such circumstances. He was saying that neither I nor anyone else can persuade you to repent. You already understand the need and only you can decide to return to the Lord and persevere to the end.

In What Does Your Faith Stand?

Introduction: What is the basis of your faith? In what does your faith stand? Is your faith in the preacher? Is your faith in what you like to hear? Is your faith in the wisdom of men? If your answer to any of these questions is yes or if your faith stands even partially in any of these things, I hope you will change your mind and the basis of your faith by the end of this lesson.

Text: 1 Corinthians 2:1-5

I. Is your faith in the preacher?

A. We are also men (Acts 14:8-15).

B. We have to bring our bodies into subjection (1 Corinthians 9:26-27).

II. Is your faith in the things you like to hear?

A. Remember Paul's warning (2 Timothy 4:1-4).

B. Certain things may not be pleasant but are needful (Jude 1:3-7).

III. Is your faith in the wisdom of men?

A. The foolishness of God is wiser (1 Corinthians 1:17-31).

B. Your faith should rest in wisdom from above (James 3:13-18).

IV. Is your faith in the gospel of Christ?

A. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16-19).

B. It is the same gospel that Paul preached (1 Corinthians 15:1-11).

Conclusion: If your faith has even a little of its origin in anything other than the gospel of Christ, you need to change your footing. The preacher can not save you. The things you like can not save you. The wisdom of man can not save you. Only the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ has any saving power. It is his blood, his grace, his sacrifice, in which we have salvation.

Children In Whom Is No Faith

Text: Deuteronomy 32:15-25

Introduction: Jeshurun's problems recorded in Deuteronomy would seem to be our problems today. We have grown fat. We are the most prosperous nation on the face of the earth. We throw away more food than most people have to eat. We overeat to point of obesity. We no longer even claim Christianity as our dominate religion. We experiment with the gods of China, India, and Japan. We turn back to the old gods of Wicca, Egypt, Rome, and Greece. Gods that the Lord tells us are no gods, but at the very best, or worst, are demons. We are a generation who has forsaken God who made us. A froward generation without faith in the Lord. We have been provoked by a foolish nation that rattled sabers that they did not have. We are moved to jealousy and fear by a people who are not a nation, but spread terror among many nations. We face the sword without, that is war overseas; and terror within. Terror so great that we have been willing to give up much of our liberty to the power hungry, and I fear will give up more. The solution is not in politics, physical might, isolationism. The solution has five letters f-a-i-t-h, faith. Faith in the God who created us, who gave his son to save us. Faith in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who gives us life and breath and all things.

I. Faith is that which ties us to God (Hebrews 11:6).

A. We must believe that He is (Ephesians 4:6; Exodus 20:3-6; Matthew 4:8-10).

B. This means believing in Jesus also (John 14:1; 8:21-30; 1 John 2:23-24).

C. We must believe in him as the rewarder (Colossians 3:23-25; Hebrews 10:35-39; 2 Peter 3:11-14)

II. The righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith (Romans 1:16-17).

A. Having faith is not enough, we must use it (James 2:14-26).

B. He has committed to us the word of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:17-21).

C. How can they believe if they do not hear (Romans 10:8-18; Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8).

Conclusion: A generation with no faith is a sad generation indeed. There is nothing solid to anchor us. We are adrift with no direction and no place to turn. Faith is the answer. Faith in God, faith in Jesus, faith that God will reward those that diligently seek him. We claim to hold the word of God by which faith comes. Holding that word, that gospel and teaching that gospel is the only way to produce faith. Have you a working faith? Put it to use. It is what's needed to produce a generation faithful rather than a generation of faithless.

Keeping the Faith

Introduction: It is becoming more and more popular to make keeping the faith and keeping the commandments of our Lord the same thing. I suppose this is because it is easier to prove one thing than it is to prove two. This tendency to make faith and obedience the same thing has especially become evident since so many today have begun to make shipwreck of the faith as Paul said Hymenaeus and Alexander had done (1 Timothy 1:18-20). While it is true that the faith and obedience can not be separated, they are not the same thing.

I. Faith and obedience are always separate even though they are usually spoken of together.

A. Paul's farewell is an example (2 Timothy 4:1-8).

1. Fighting the good fight involves keeping his commandments (1 Timothy 6:11-12).
2. Finishing the course involves keeping his commandments (1 Corinthians 9:24-27).
3. Keeping the faith involves maintaining the hope in Christ (Hebrews 3:5-6).

B. Paul said the gospel was made known for the obedience of faith (Romans 16:25-27).

II. It is that faith which comes of the gospel that we must hold fast.

A. It is by faith that we know the love of God (Ephesians 3:14-19).

B. Hold fast our faith without wavering (Hebrews 10:19-25).

Conclusion: Holding fast our faith means keeping ever before us the word and promises of God. It means maintaining our hope, firm to the end. The only way we can do that is by following Christ and his word that we may know we are pleasing to him.

Why Is the Church Important?

Introduction: More and more people are asking, "Why is the church important? Why can't I be a Christian and claim Jesus as my savior without ever being a member of the church? What does the church have to do with salvation?" First of all let me point out that I have no choice as to whether or not I am a member of the church. If I am saved, the Lord adds me to his church (Acts 2:47).

I. He purchased the church with his blood (Acts 20:28).

A. True that he gave his life and blood for the salvation of each person (1 Peter 1:18-21).

B. Together we make up the church (1 Corinthians 1:2-3).

II. The church is his body (Colossians 1:12-18).

A. We each have gifts necessary to that body (Romans 12:1-8).

B. We and the church can grow only when each member does his or her part (Ephesians 4:7-16).

Conclusion: These are only two of the reasons why the church is important. We could cite many others. To try to be saved without the church is to try being saved without the blood of Christ. His blood purchased both your salvation and the church to which he adds the saved. It is his body, and we are members of that body. As with any body it works the will of the head.

What's the difference?

Introduction: In his book *The Second Coming Of The Church*, George Barna says that he believes there is one principle reason for the lack of church growth. There is no difference between Christians and non-Christians. That may seem like a strange idea, but his surveys prove it! Christians are no more likely to read the Bible than non-Christians. Christians give less than non-Christians. Christians are more likely to be divorced than non-Christians. Christians are less likely than non-Christians to help those in need. Christians are almost as likely as non-Christians to watch pornography. Christians are no more likely to discuss their beliefs than non-Christians. It leaves you asking what's the difference?

Text: Titus 2:11-14; 1 Peter 2:1-12

I. A peculiar people (1 Peter 4:1-11).

A. An example of the believers (1 Timothy 4:12-16).

B. You have been washed, sanctified, justified (1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Romans 6:16-19).

II. Zealous of good works (Galatians 6:7-10).

A. To glorify God (Matthew 5:13-16).

B. Our works follow us (Revelation 14:13).

Conclusion: What's the difference? The difference ought to be obvious. It is not just for the sake of being different, but a difference that glorifies God. If we want the church to grow, we must show that difference in our lives. What's the point to being a Christian if it makes you no different than everyone else?

Partakers of the Heavenly Calling

Text: Hebrews 3:1-6

Introduction: In our text, the Hebrew writer has just finished telling his readers that Jesus suffered being tempted that he might give help to us when we are tempted. Then he calls us “holy brethren”. As Paul put it, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” (Romans 12:1-2).

- I. Holiness is much easier when we consider the faithfulness of Jesus.
 - A. He was our Apostle – Official messenger from heaven (Matthew 17:5).
 - B. He is our High Priest (Hebrews 4:14-16).
 - C. Jesus was faithful, perfect, and sinless.
 1. We are most certainly not sinless (Romans 3:23; 1 John 1:8).
 2. We can be perfect (Philippians 3:8-15).
 3. We can be faithful (Revelation 2:10).

- II. Jesus example is of more glory than that of Moses.
 - A. Jesus built the house to which the faithful belong (Matthew 16:13-20; 1 Timothy 3:14-15).
 - B. Jesus is a son over his own house.
 1. God created man (Genesis 1:26-28).
 2. Man fell from God's perfect image.
 3. We are recreated in Jesus (2 Corinthians 5:17-21).
 - C. We are his house
 1. If we hold fast our confidence to the end (Hebrews 3:12-14; Colossians 1:18-23).
 2. Holding firm our rejoicing in hope (Romans 5:1-5; 12:9-13).

Conclusion: Let us therefore follow Jesus in all things that we may be faithful to him that called us.

More Than a Student

Introduction: When most of us think of a disciple, we think of a student or learner. This may be because the American Standard Version of 1901 translated Matthew 28:18 as “make disciples of all the nations” instead of “teach all nations” as we were already familiar with in the King James Version. Our reasoning seems to be that if we are to “teach all nations” then making disciples means making students or learners. In fact, the very reason for the difference in translation is that Jesus original words in Greek require far more than making people students of Christ, discipleship requires us to be followers of Christ. It is an all or nothing proposition. Jesus said, “He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.” (Matthew 12:30).

- I. We have left all to follow thee (Luke 18:18-30).
 - A. Trust not in uncertain riches (1 Timothy 6:17-19).
 - B. Confidence in the flesh must be left behind (Philippians 3:4-14).
 - C. We must love Jesus more than anyone or anything (Matthew 10:34-39).
- II. We must follow him even on the cross (Matthew 16:13-27).
 - A. All that will live Godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution (2 Timothy 3:10-17).
 - B. Fiery trials are the norm (1 Peter 4:12-19).
 - C. Lack of persecution may be because of failure to bear the fruit of the spirit (Galatians 5:22-26).

Conclusion: While it is true that we must be a student, that is study to show ourselves approved (2 Timothy 2:15). It is also true that the purpose of this study is to make us a workman that does not need to be ashamed, a disciple, following Jesus even on the cross.

If Only They Had Known

Text: 1 Corinthians 2:6-16

Introduction: The question “What if...?”, is a favorite of science fiction fans around the world. It asks what might have happened if things had been different. In our text, the apostle Paul is not implying that things might have been different if the princes of this world had known who Jesus was. The sacrifice of Jesus for man's sin was planned before the world began (2 Timothy 1:8-10). The princes of this world did not know him because they did not and could not know the wisdom of God. The very nature of their thinking prevented them from knowing.

- I. The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit (James 3:13-17).
 - A. It has not entered into his heart (Jeremiah 10:23-24).
 - B. They are foolishness to him (1 Corinthians 1:18-31).
- II. You must have received the Spirit of God to discern these things (Ephesians 5:1-20).
 - A. Quench not the Spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:6-24).
 - B. Meditate on these things (1 Timothy 4:11-16).

Conclusion: The princes of the world did not know the Lord because they depended on the wisdom of the world to govern their people. The princes of the world still would not recognize him today because they still do not use the word of God as their sole guide. They use the constitutions and laws of men. They would no more understand the Prince of Peace today than when he walked the earth. It is still as the Lord said long ago, “Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.” (Mark 10:42-45). We must give up the world and the things of this world if we expect to understand the Lord and his way. We must give ourselves completely to the things of God if we expect our profiting to appear to even to us let alone anyone else.

Setting a Snare for your Soul

Text: Proverbs 22:24-25, NKJV

Introduction: In our text, the wise man urges us not to go with an angry man lest we learn his ways and set a snare for our soul. This is only one way that we may set a snare for our own soul. There are many others. Let us consider a few that we may know how to avoid doing ourselves a great disservice.

- I. The love of money is a snare (1 Timothy 6:3-12).
 - A. Where your treasure is your heart will be (Matthew 6:19-21).
 - B. Even the gospel is perverted for the sake of money (Titus 1:10-11).
- II. The love of the world is a snare (1 John 2:15-17).
 - A. Set your affection on things above (Colossians 3:1-4).
 - B. Be transformed by the renewing of your mind (Romans 12:1-2).
- III. Failure to love one another sets a terrible snare (1 John 4:20-21).
 - A. Love must be without hypocrisy (Romans 12:9-10).
 - B. Love must be fervent and from a pure heart (1 Peter 1:22-23).
- IV. Failure to love the truth is a snare (2 Thessalonians 2:1-12).
 - A. Love of the truth causes us to come to the light (John 3:19-21).
 - B. We hear and follow Jesus (John 18:37-38).
 1. Jesus is the truth (John 14:6).
 2. Truth knock at the door of your heart (Revelation 3:20).

Conclusion: We could probably continue to enumerate snares that we could set for our souls, but the point is not the snares. The point is to be aware of how we may avoid setting these snares. From these four, I believe that it is clear that the word of God is means by which we can assure the safety of our souls (2 Timothy 3:14-17).

The Fire, The Wood, The Lamb

Text: Genesis 22:1-14 (NKJV)

Introduction: It must have been a heart rending experience when God asked Abraham to offer Isaac as a sacrifice, even though we are told that he knew God was able to raise his only son from the dead (Hebrews 11:17-19). The pain would have been even worse when Isaac asked a very pointed question. "Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" Of course as the text says, God did indeed provide a ram caught in a nearby thicket, when it became obvious that Abraham intended to carry out his command. It was never the Lord's intention to accept Isaac as a human sacrifice, but he has provided for us a lamb which is both human and divine, one without spot or blemish, who was tempted in all points as we are yet without sin. In fact, God has also provided the wood and the fire for a living sacrifice, but we must accept the lamb and use the wood and fire provided.

I. God provided the lamb (John 1:29-34).

A. To give us power to become sons of God (John 1:11-14).

B. To become author of eternal salvation (Hebrews 5:8-9).

C. To allow us to become a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1-2).

II. God provided the wood.

A. The gospel is never referred to as wood.

B. The gospel is the basis of our salvation (Ephesians 1:12-14).

C. Giving ourselves as a living sacrifice is done by his will (2 Corinthians 8:1-5).

III. God provided the fire (Hebrews 12:28-29).

A. We may be consumed by that fire here or hereafter.

B. Here he gives us of his Spirit (Romans 8:1-27).

C. It is not the Word, but does not exist without the word, as fire does not exist without the wood.

Conclusion: God has provided the means of making our lives a living sacrifice. He offered his Son to make that possible. By accepting his offering through the offering of ourselves, we can have everlasting life.

Come and See

Text: John 1:45-46

Introduction: When Philip went to tell Nathaniel, “We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.” Nathaniel replied. “Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?” Philip's answer was simple. “Come and see.” Just as there were many misconceptions about Christ, there are many misconceptions about his church. Our plea to our friends and neighbors during the coming year is the same as Philip's plea to Nathaniel. “Come and see.” Let us look at three common misconceptions about the churches of Christ and how we may overcome them.

- I. The Churches of Christ are judgmental.
 - A. Even Jesus did not judge those he taught (John 12:46-48).
 - B. He taught his disciples not to judge people (Matthew 7:1-5; Luke 6:37-38).
 - C. The light of God's word makes our deeds manifest (John 3:17-21).
- II. The Churches of Christ do not believe in the Holy Ghost or have the Spirit.
 - A. Every Christian receives the gift of the Holy Ghost at baptism (Acts 2:38-39).
 - B. We worship in spirit and in truth (John 4:23-24).
 - C. If any has not the spirit of Christ he is none of His (Romans 8:6-9).
- III. The churches of Christ do not believe in the grace of God.
 - A. We are saved by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:4-10).
 - B. Grace does not mean that we continue in sin (Romans 6:1-6).
 - C. Grace does not rule out obedience (Romans 6:15-18).

Conclusion: There are many other misconceptions about the churches of Christ that we could consider. There may be some for which we have been responsible, but it is time we corrected these both by word and action. We must continually examine ourselves whether we be in the faith (2 Corinthians 13:5). Give ourselves to the study of the word (2 Timothy 2:15), and obey it (Romans 16:25-27).

How long Lord?

Text: Revelation 6:9-11

Introduction: So far as I know, there is nothing for which I wish to ask the Lord to avenge me. I have been truly blessed with a good and I hope useful life in the Lord without the more serious persecutions that have affected many. Yet I can not help but ask a part of the question asked by “the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held.” “How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge . . . them that dwell on the earth?”

- I. When the end comes it will be as it was in the days of Noe and Lot (Luke 17:26-30).
 - A. In Noah's time the earth was corrupt and full of violence (Genesis 6:11-12).
 - B. In Lot's time the Lord could not find 10 righteous souls in Sodom (Genesis 18-19)
- II. How many righteous will be required today to spare the earth?
 - A. God says there is none righteous (Romans 3:10-18).
 - B. The earth's continuation does not depend on man's righteousness (Genesis 8:21-22).
- III. The earth's existence depends on man's willingness to repent.
 - A. God wants all to come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9-15).
 - B. In the end the Lord will come quickly (Revelation 22:6-21).

Conclusion: The grace of God has been given to us so that we may repent and obey, so that the righteous blood of Jesus may cleanse us from our sins and continue to do so as long as we walk with him in the light of his word. When men and women cease to repent and obey, the Lord will come quickly, “In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Thessalonians 1:8). When that will be, I do not know, but I do know that when men say, “Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.” (1 Thessalonians 5:3).

It Is More Blessed To Give

Introduction: We are approaching that season of the year when we begin thinking about what we are going to “get” the children and grandchildren for Christmas. Likewise, throughout the year, we think about “getting” gifts for loved ones birthdays, anniversaries, graduation, and other occasions. It is our phrasing about what we are “getting” for the kids or whoever is what should throw up a red flag about our attitude. Instead of an occasion for giving, it remains an occasion for “getting” even though we are “getting” for someone else. Jesus did not say, “It is more blessed to get things for others than it is to get things for yourself.” He said, “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” (Acts 20:35). Yet, the Lord knows our tendency toward getting. Thus he inspired Solomon to tell us, “Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding.” (Proverbs 4:7). Therefore, we would like to get an understanding of true giving. Real giving comes from the heart (2 Corinthians 9:7). The real point here is not the fact that it must be done cheerfully, but that it comes from the heart. If we give from the heart it will be done cheerfully.

- I. *The Gift of the Magi* is an example with which we are familiar.
 - A. The point was not that each got what they most wanted.
 - B. The point was that each was willing to give their most precious possession because of their love for each other (1 Corinthians 13:3).
- II. The Macedonians gift of themselves is a Biblical example (2 Corinthians 8:1-12).
 - A. Our hearts follow our treasure (Matthew 6:19-21).
 - B. A willing mind makes our gift acceptable (Mark 12:41-44).
- III. Giving is a matter of faith (Luke 6:38).
 - A. God has promised to take care of us. (Matthew 6:24-34).
 - B. God is able to make us abound so that we may have “all sufficiency in all things” (2 Corinthians 9:6-8).

Conclusion: True giving comes from the heart. This requires a “willing mind”, a desire to give, and faith that God will provide. Most of all we need to give ourselves first of all.

Practical Giving

Text: Acts 20:35

Introduction: Most of us believe in the blessings of giving, but find it difficult to give, especially of our money. There are just too many bills and obligations to give as much as we ought to the Lord. We should put the Lord first (Matthew 6:33), but these things continually hinder us. In this lesson we will deal with practical giving of our means.

I. God expects you to meet your obligations to men.

A. To pay your bills (Romans 13:7-8).

B. To provide for your family (1 Timothy 5:8).

II. Don't be choked by those cares (Luke 8:14).

A. Determine how much you will give in advance (2 Corinthians 9:6-11).

B. Put your offering aside first (1 Corinthians 16:2).

III. Giving as you are prospered is not easy (2 Corinthians 8:12-16).

A. Remember how well you give determines what you receive (Luke 6:38).

B. If you want to give more, raise your offering a dollar a week.

IV. Give yourself your money will follow.

A. Where your treasure is your heart will be (Matthew 6:19-21).

B. The Macedonians example shows this also works in reverse (2 Corinthians 8:1-6).

Conclusion: God knows if we really want to give and will be patient if we do our best and make every effort to improve our giving. There is one thing that God wants us to give above all else, ourselves.

Gold and Blue and Purple and Scarlet

Introduction: Gold and blue and purple and scarlet have always been regarded as colors of royalty. All were originally very expensive. Even today, there is no source of true gold color except the precious metal itself. Other metals and color combinations produce something close but only gold itself is truly gold in color. The sources of blue, purple, and scarlet were equally rare in Bible times. These were not only royal colors, but more importantly they were the colors of the priesthood under the Law of Moses (Exodus 28:1-43; 39:1-31). This is the only time that all four colors are mentioned together, although all four were used in the tabernacle and temple. Gold was used to overlay the wood, with blue, purple, and scarlet used for the fabric of the curtains and hangings.

I. Gold

- A. Has always been a precious metal (Genesis 2:11-12).
- B. Has always been a symbol of riches (Genesis 13:2).
- C. Can not redeem us (1 Peter 1:18-21).
- D. Is not the true adorning of a Christian woman (1 Peter 3:1-4).
- E. Is not as precious as the trying of our faith (1 Peter 1:3-9).
- F. Described as paving the streets of the Heavenly City (Revelation 21:21).

II. Blue

- A. Is mentioned only in the Old Testament.
 - 1. 50 times in 49 verses.
 - 2. Mostly in connection with the tabernacle and temple.
- B. The final six references mention it in regard to other things.
 - 1. The court of King Ahasuerus (Esther 1:6).
 - 2. The robes placed on Mordecai after the king destroyed Haman and his plot against the Jews (Esther 8:15).
 - 3. The colors used to decorate idols (Jeremiah 10:9).
 - 4. The clothing of the lovers of a harlot (Ezekiel 23:6).
 - 5. The sails of the ships of Tyrus (Ezekiel 27:7).
 - 6. The description of products brought to Tyrus by merchants (Ezekiel 27:24)

III. Purple

- A. The color of the robe used to mock Jesus (John 19:1-7).
- B. The dye or cloth sold by Lydia (Acts 16:11-15).
- C. A color associated with the great harlot in Revelation (Revelation 17:4; 18:12,16).

IV. Scarlet

- A. The color of sin (Isaiah 1:18).
- B. The color of a second robe placed on Jesus by the soldiers (Matthew 27:26-31).
- C. Another color associated with the great harlot (Revelation 17:3-4; 18:12,16).

Conclusion: Oddly enough none of these colors describe the clothing of the saints even though the New Testament calls us priests and kings (Revelation 1:6;5:10), the saints wear the color of servants (Revelation 7:13-17). “And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.” (Revelation 7:13-17). Which is more important to you? Gold and blue and purple and scarlet? Or robes washed and made white in the blood of the lamb?

Real Homes are made of People

Introduction: Not long ago I heard a commercial on TV that ended with the catch phrase “Real Homes Are Mad of Brick”. My mind, thinking in the spiritual realm rather than the physical, immediately said, “No they are not. Real homes are made of people.” Now at least according to the commercial, real homes are made of brick to avoid maintenance problems. Brick doesn't require painting, saves on heating and cooling bills, etc. On the other hand, real homes in the spiritual realm are going to experience problems because they are made of people. Anyone over two or three years old knows that where people are there are going to be problems. That is because “There is none righteous, no, not one” (Romans 3:10). A home that appears to have no problems, either is not a home, everyone just ignores everyone else; or one person has a very heavy foot on everyone else. It is much better to admit the problems, even if they are minor, than to let them grow to unmanageable proportions. These problems basically fall into three categories: problems of priority, problems of communication, and problems of leadership.

I. Problems of priority (Proverbs 15:16-17).

A. Seek ye first (Matthew 6:25-33).

B. Provide necessities (1 Timothy 5:8).

C. Don't suppose gain to be godliness (1 Timothy 6:5-12).

II. Problems of communication (1 Corinthians 14:8-9).

A. Let your speech be with grace, seasoned with salt (Colosians 4:6).

B. Brawling doesn't help (Proverbs 25:24).

C. A soft answer turns away wrath (Proverbs 15:1).

III. Problems of leadership (1 Corinthians 11:3).

A. Children obey your parents (Ephesians 6:1-4).

B. Husband is the head of the wife (Ephesians 5:22-33).

1. The wife may lead the husband to obey the Lord (1 Peter 3:1-6).

2. This is also true of a husband with an unbelieving wife (1 Corinthians 7:12-16).

C. God is above all (Ephesians 4:6).

Conclusion: The real home made of people may not be problem free, but it can overcome all problems with the help of God.

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