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Following Christ

In the Bible we read of different ones following Christ. He invited them to do this. In Matthew 4:18-20, we read, "And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishers. And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make yuu fishers of men. And they straightway left their nets, and followed him." On another occasion Christ said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." (Luke 9:23). One day Peter said to the Lord, "Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore? And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life." (Matthew 19:27-29).

Jesus invited all to follow him, when he said, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." (Matthew 11:28-30). Peter wrote in 1 Peter 2:21, "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps."

How was it possible for someone like Christ to invite men and women to follow him, and then for them to be willing to do so? He was a carpenter's son from lowly Nazareth. He was a poor man who received no formal education as far as we know. He lived among the common people and never traveled very far from his home. Yet, there were those who were willing to forsake all, to suffer persecution, and even to die in order to follow him. Again, we ask, why? This was because he was more than a mere man. He was the Son of God, having been born of the Virgin Mary. He spoke as no other man; he spoke as one having authority. He performed miracles, had the power to forgive sins, and he came into the world to die for the sins of all and to be man's saviour. Nicodemus said of him, "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him." (John 3:2). Christ called God his Father, but more importantly, God spoke of him as being his Son. (John 17:21; Matthew 17:5).

Even to this day, almost two thousand years after he came into the world, there are millions and millions around the globe that have answered his call to follow him. They hear and answer his call because he not only lived and died for man, but he was resurrected from the tomb, and this day he sits at the right hand of God as King of kings and Lord of lords. He is man's saviour, his high priest, his king, his example. He lives in their hearts and lives in their service to mankind. He has promised that he will come again, and indeed he will.

Are you a follower of Christ? Not all can follow him. Many are called, but few are chosen. He invites, but one must accept.

There are a number of conditions with which one must comply.

First, one must believe in Christ. Jesus said, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me." (John 14:1). Again, he said, "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." (John 8:24). In John 3:36 we have this statement: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

Second, one must repent or turn from his sins. Christ said, "I tell you, Nay: but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." (Luke 13:3).

Third, the person who would follow Christ must be willing to confess Christ before men. Jesus himself made this statement: "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven." (Matthew 10:32, 33).

Fourth, Christ had commanded baptism. In Mark 16:15, 16 Jesus commanded the Apostles, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

Fifth, to be a follower of Christ one must keep his commandments. He said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." (John 14:15). Again, he said, "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." (John 15:14).

Sixth, Christ said we should love the Lord with all our heart and our neighbour as ourselves. Listen to his words: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." (Matthew 22:37-39).

Seventh, to follow Christ one must give up worldly things and do the work of the Lord. He pointed out to his disciples, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me." (Matthew 16:24). In Luke 9:23 he said that this must be done daily.

Eighth, following Christ includes worshipping God. Christ said to the Samaritan woman, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." (John 4:24).

Ninth, to follow Christ means that one must travel on the narrow way. Hear Christ, as he says, "Enter ye in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." (Matthew 7:13, 14). He also declared, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." (John 14:6).

Tenth, one must set a good example as a follower of Christ. He said, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." (Matthew 5:16).

Eleventh, and finally, one must put God and his kingdom or church first in his life. Christ said to his followers, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matthew 6:33).

As you can see, following Christ is very involved. It includes obeying the Lord, recognizing him as Lord and Master of your life, shunning all that is bad and wrong, and doing all of those things that are good and right. For those who will so do then Christ has many rewards for them both in this world and in the world to come.

Many of those today who think they are following Christ are actually deceived. They are like Saul, when he thought he was doing God's will, but then he found out that he was wrong. (Acts

26:9). Christ said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." (Matthew 7:21).

I would therefore ask you to seriously consider what Christ has asked of those who would follow him. He would require that all such people implicitly believe in him and to do exactly what he has asked without question or excuse. It also means that one must not only begin, but he must continue to follow Christ all the days of his life if he is to receive the heavenly reward. Those who would look back, turn back, or quit are not worthy of him.

The Lord does not expect more than that which we can do. He knows us, our needs, our weaknesses, and our potentials. He has promised to be with us, to help us to overcome our temptations, and to bless us. He will never let us down or forsake us. Likewise, if we are followers of his, let us never fail him or disappoint him.

Are you a follower of Christ? If not, then you need to be. You need him in your life. He can change you and give you a new life. Hear him and obey him, walk in his steps, look to him for guidance and direction, and he will lead you to that upper and better kingdom, heaven itself.



**associate
editorial**

"But From The Beginning It Was Not So"

"And it came to pass, that when Jesus had finished these

sayings, he departed from Galilee, and came into the coasts of Judaea beyond Jordan; And great multitudes followed him; and he healed them there. The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh, What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so." (Matthew 19:1-8).

It is interesting to note here that Jesus goes back to the beginning of the institution of marriage by God to reply to the question put before him by the Pharisees. He said, *but from the beginning it was not so*. Then on the basis of that he advised them to do what God established in the beginning. The Bible is the Word of God, and the word of God is the seed of God's spiritual kingdom. (Luke 8:11). When God in the beginning created the heaven and the earth and all things therein, he said, "Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good." (Genesis 1:11, 12). This law God established in the beginning, and we still get wheat from wheat and rice from rice. The same principle applies to God's word, the seed of His kingdom. If we will preach only the word of God, hear the same word of God, believe and obey the same word of God, what Christ himself and through his Apostles commanded in the beginning, then we will be not different and divided, but we all will be one in Christ, Christians only and members of the church of Christ. (1 Corinthians 1:10-13; 12:1-27). In the days of the Apostles wherever God's word was preached or taught, it produced the same kind of result, that is, people believed in Christ, repented

of their sins, and were baptized. (Acts 2:37-47; 8:12; 8:35-39; 9:1-18; 22:16; 28:18-20; Mark 16:15, 16). They all became Christians and members of the same church, that Christ said he would build. (Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:47; Acts 11:26; Romans 16:16). As Christians and members of the church of Christ they steadfastly followed the Apostles' doctrine, or the New Testament. (Matthew 28:18, 20; John 14:26; Revelation 22:18, 19).

Today there are in different churches "Christians" of several kind, to name some of them: Pentecostal Christian, Catholic Christian, Menonite Christian, Methodist Christian, Baptist Christian, etc., etc. But from the beginning it was not so. Jesus, in Matthew 15:13 said, "Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up." And at another place he said this parable: "The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So, the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn." (Matthew 13:24-30).

Investigate yourself and the church you are a member of in light of God's word. Religiously the name you wear, the things you do, has God authorised them in the New Testament of the Bible? You can be honest and religious, but honestly mistaken and religiously wrong. Just like the Apostle Paul, before he became a Christian and a member of the church of Christ. (Acts 23:1). But once he learned the truth he believed it and obeyed it. (Acts 9:1-18; 22:16). What are you going to do? If we can help you further in this matter let us know.

How Did Adam Make Us Sinners?

Curtis Dowdy

“BIBLE TRUTHS : ‘By one man’s disobedience many were made sinners.’ Adam made us sinners. We didn’t make ourselves sinners. See Rom. 5:19,” this ad appeared recently in a local newspaper. I want to look especially at, “Adam made us sinners.”

First, Romans 5:19 was not quoted in its entirety. “For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.”

Second, does the passage teach what the above ad says: namely, that what we do has nothing to do with our being sinners, but what Adam did is inherent, inborn, in all his descendants? As is so often the case, misunderstanding result by isolating one passage and trying to build a “doctrine” upon it. Romans 5:19 is in the middle of a discussion that Paul sets forth to show that what was lost through the First Adam is more than regained through the Second Adam.

Third, if Romans 5:19 teaches universally inherited sin, because of the disobedience of Adam, it also teaches universally inherited righteousness, because of the obedience of Christ. Thus the one cancels out the other, but that which teaches too much teaches nothing.

Fourth, Romans 5:19 appears in a paragraph that begins with verse 12 and concludes at verse 21. “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned” (Romans 5:12). It is of course true that one of the consequences of Adam’s sin is physical death, not because of inborn sin, because the “tree of life” was removed from the reach of man. Man does not die physically because he has inherited the first man’s sin, but because he no longer has access to the “tree of life” that he might put forth his hand, eat, and live forever. (Genesis 3:22). However, the death of

Romans 5:12 is not physical death but spiritual. Spiritual death is not the result of inheriting anybody's sin, including Adam's, but the result of man's own sin. How do I know that this is what Paul is teaching? Verse 14 says so! "Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the SMILITUDE (likeness ASV) of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come" (emphasis mine, C.D.). This helps us to understand that the sin that "all have sinned" in verse 12 is not the sin of Adam in verse 14, else it would have been the SAME, but Paul clearly says it is NOT after the smilitude" (likeness) of Adam's.

Fifth, it is true that sin through Adam was introduced into the world, but is it true that we are all dead spiritually because of Adam and without any choice on our part? No! No more than that we are all alive spiritually because spiritual life was introduced into the world through Christ. As it is impossible for us to partake of spiritual life apart from an obedient faith, so we do not partake of spiritual death apart from personal choice.

Sixth, had Adam introduced cancer into the world, that would not prove that all of his offsprings are born with cancer. To understand that people are born into a world where sin abounds and to which they are subject is not the same as saying that people are born sinners. Adam was created with the ability to choose between life and death; he exercised his choice on the side of death, but that does not prove that he was created a sinner. For one today to be "born in sin" is no more a born sinner than one "born in dirt" is a born dirter.

Now, to home in on Romans 5:19. The "many" who were made sinners are the many who choose to serve sin, so the "many" who shall be made righteous are the many who choose to serve Christ. (Romans 6:17, 18). The acclaimed atheist Ms. O'Hare makes infidels, but that does not mean that her atheism is inherited not imputed to others. I do not know who first introduced atheism into the world, but I do know that all those since that time have become such by personal choice.

Finally, Paul does not tell how the many were made sinners

by the disobedience of Adam, nor does he tell how the many are made righteous by the obedience of Christ (Romans 5:19). This information will be found in other texts. Thus the author of the above mentioned ad has assumed that which he must prove when he writes, "We didn't make ourselves sinners."

A last question is in order, does God hold me responsible for another's sin?

Heavenly Destiny Of The Church

When we speak of "the church" we speak only of the New Testament church, the church of the Bible. In a true Scriptural sense there is only that one "blood bought, Spirit filled; Christ claimed, eternity destined" church named in the Bible and of which we all should be members.

The church is God's plan of salvation from the foundation of the world, eternally purposed in Christ Jesus (Matt. 25:34; Eph. 3:11). His redeeming work is made known in the church of Christ; that body which He promises to save eternally (Acts 2:47; Eph. 5:23).

In Christ's announcing His intention to "build His church" He also spoke of it as "the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 16:18, 19). He did build His church and gave privileged Peter the joy of exercising the use of "the keys of the kingdom of heaven" on Pentecost day in Jerusalem (Acts 2). Heaven did not come to the earth; but the kingdom of heaven did come to the world as it had been received by God's Christ on His ascension unto the Ancient of Days in heaven. There was then given to Him "dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed" (Dan. 7:14). This kingdom came—with power—from God—to man—on that great day of Pentecost. (Mark 9:1; Acts 2:1-47).

Those of the apostolic age spoke of its glorified and eternal nature. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews speaks of Christians who have come "unto the city of the living God, heavenly Jerusalem...to the general assembly and church of the first born which are written in heaven..." (Heb. 12:22, 23). Their citizenship was in that Kingdom, the church, a citizenship recorded in heaven. (Phil. 3:20). The church, the kingdom of heaven, for now more than nineteen hundred years has been on the earth, this low ground of sin and sorrow. It shall continue here throughout time and man's earthly experience. It, even now and on the earth, is glorious and beautiful notwithstanding its human imperfections and the terrible element of human sin and shame. Even in "this present evil world, that lieth in wickedness" it is the kingdom of light (Gal. 1:3; 1 Jn. 5:19; 1 Pet. 2:9; Col. 1:13). Its current beauty and holiness is seen best only by those who "walk in the light," those who are members of His church.

We know not what shall be destiny, fortunes, or misfortunes of the church of our Lord, during its remaining earthly times. We would suppose its future earthly history will be much the same as its past history of nineteen centuries: victory and conquest, persecution, even apostasy, in favour with some, greatly hated by others. Its ultimate history on the earth is unknown to man, those chapters are yet to be written.

However, God has not left us to wonder of its eternal destiny. Elementary thoughts cause us to know that the church is heaven bound. The saved are added to the church (Acts 2:47). Christ has gone to prepare a place for the saved, the place called heaven (John 14:1-3). Paul states that Christ is the saviour of the body, the church (Eph. 1:22, 23; 5:23). Save it where? In heaven, of course.

When the shades of the last earthly day draws to a close, when heaven's angel announces "time no more," then the end—but not the end of the church, the kingdom of God. Paul speaks, "Then cometh the end, when He shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power" (1 Cor. 15:24). The kingdom is presented as "a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such

thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5:27). All defiling members of the body have in the judgment been purged from the glorious church (Matt. 13:47-50).

John presents the beauty and splendor of the church in glory. On Patmos lonely isle John was privileged with visions of glory: "I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband—the bride, the Lamb's wife" (Rev. 21:2, 9). The church, the bride of Christ (cf. Eph. 5:21-33, esp. v. 32), in all her purity and beauty will be glorified with Him throughout the ceaseless ages of Eternity.

Who is it that says that the church is not important? That it hasn't anything to do with one's salvation? O' foolish man, who hast deceived thy soul?

"Unto Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all generations for ever and ever" (Eph. 3:21). The eternal kingdom, the church of the Living God, is destined unto eternal and ceaseless glory in heaven.

Remember

Garland Elkins

"Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, of the seed of David, according to my gospel" (II Tim. 2:8). The apostles and all Christians of the first century gave special prominence to the resurrection of Christ. "Who was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead; even Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 1:4). The Jews could not deny the fact, for they or their friends were witnesses of it. The gospel still sets forth not a dead but a living Christ. "Now I make known unto you, brethren, the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye received, wherein also ye stand, by which also ye are saved, if ye hold fast the word which I preached unto you, except ye believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of

all that which also I received: that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures" (I Cor. 15:1-3).

Sometimes we are dull of comprehension. One day when Jesus found His disciples with only one loaf of bread, He set before them to "...Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod" (Mk. 8:15). The powerful influence of the religious leaders and the civil authorities could destroy the godliness of any one of the Lord's disciples who were not on guard against it. Jesus saw that His followers did not at once understand the lesson, thinking that the Lord referred to the law of food supply. With the question, "Do you not remember"? He began to remind them of the feeding of the five thousand and the four thousand, as if to tell them, "You are in need of the lesson that I have shown you. You forget that I am able to supply the needs of multitudes. If you will remember that you will realize that I can feed the soul, if that soul will be on guard against the influences of false leaders."

In the question, "And do you remember?" is the secret of our ability to escape the evil that seeks to destroy us. Remember the Lord in our weakness and we gain strength. Keep before us the truth and we can overcome error (I Cor. 10:13; Eph. 6:10-18). The hours spent in Bible study, classes and worship are not wasted hours. David said, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Ps. 119:11). Such preparation serves us well in the commonplace problems of life. When we are in material uncertainty we recall that we must, "seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you" (Mt. 6:33).

In times of sorrow there is a need for stronger faith. The Christian remembers that a sympathetic Lord could shed tears of grief with man (Mt. 23:37; Lk. 19:41; Jno. 11:35). Peter wrote, "casting all your anxiety upon him, because he careth for you" (I Pet. 5:7).

When we are tempted we remember that Jesus when tempted repeatedly answered the tempter with the words, "It is written..."

Persecution but enhances the Lord's promise, "Great is your reward in heaven" (Mt. 5:12).

When as Christians we view the vast world of unbelief, and contemplate its end, we must remember that Jesus said, "Make disciples of all nations." He assures us that in our going, teaching, and baptizing them He will be with us, even to the end of the world. (Mt. 28:18-20).

Let us remember the Lord, not only during the Lord's Supper (Lk. 22:19; I Cor. 11:22-34), but also in our lives. If we remember Him now He will remember us in trials, during death and He will be merciful to us on the day of judgment.

There's A Church You Ought To Know

This church pleads for the restoration of the New Testament church; practices the unity of all Christians on the basis of God's Word; has no creed but Christ; and preaches no "isms."

This church seeks to present Christianity as intelligent as science, as appealing as art, as vital as the day's work, as intimate as home, and as inspiring as love.

Our Foundation—"Other foundations can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ."—1 Corinthians 3:11.

Our Creed—"Thou art the Christ the Son of God."—Matthew 16:16.

Our Rule of Faith and Practice—"All Scripture is inspired of God is also profitable for doctrine, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect throughly furnished unto all good works."—II Timothy 3:16-17.

Our Name—"The disciples were called Christians, first in Antioch."—Acts 11:26. "The churches of Christ salute you."—Romans 16:16.

Our Worship—"And they continued steadfastly in the apostles, teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and in prayers."—Acts 2:42. "...singing and making melody with the heart to the Lord" Eph. 5:19.

Our Mission—"Go ye therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."—Matthew 28:19-20.

Our Prayer—That the disciples of Christ may all be one that the world may believe God sent Him.—John 17:21.

Our Invitation—We earnestly invite the cooperation and prayers of all who endorse these principles.

Love Defined

John Stacy

Someone has likened love to a beam of light that is shown through a crystal prism. When light shines through the prism, it is broken down into its many component colours, red, blue, yellow, violet, and orange.

In our text, we will try to let the light of love shine through the prism of our mind, that we might see the many component parts of love.

Let's take a look at three of them. They are mentioned in I Cor. 13:4 which says, "Love suffereth long, and is kind: love envieth not..."

First, of all let us learn that love suffereth long. Other definitions or translations render the phrase, "love is long-tempered, self-restrained in the face of provocation, not quick to retaliate. Love suffers, sees, and yet endures. Love is patience with people and events."

Certainly longsuffering is God-like! John tells us that God is love! (I John 4:8). Moses wrote of God in Exodus 34:6. "...The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering and abundant in goodness and truth."

To suffer long is Christ-like! Consider Matthew 25:63: "But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God." Peter wrote this of Jesus in I Peter 2:23, "Who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously." Yes, Jesus was and is longsuffering (II Pet. 3:9, 15).

Christians are to be longsuffering. Longsuffering is one of the fruits of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22). Our hearts are to be graced with longsuffering (Col. 3:12). Paul said in I Thessalonians 5:4, "Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, encourage the fainthearted, support the weak, be longsuffering toward all men."

Oh how we need to be longsuffering! The longsuffering individual is of great understanding (Prov. 14:29); stops strife (Pro 15:18); is powerful (Prov. 16:32); and is always able to pass over transgression. (Prov. 19:11).

Christians can be longsuffering because they know that, "all things work together for good, for them that love the Lord..." (Rom. 8:28).

Secondly, love is kind. Other definitions or translations of this phrase say that, "love is good, mild, serviceable, gentle, tender, affectionate, and useful."

Once again, to be kind is to be like God! Twenty-six times in the one hundred and thirty-sixth Psalm, we are told that the loving kindness of God endureth forever.

We also imitate Jesus when we are kind, for he spent His life doing kind things. His earthly ministry can be summed up in three verses. Matthew 4:23, says, "And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people." Consider now Luke 4:18, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath annointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised." Yes, "Jesus went about doing good" (Acts 10:38).

Kindness is a Christian characteristic that can spell the difference between heaven and hell. (See. Mt. 25:34:46). Our Lord taught in Luke 6:35, "But love your enemies, and do them good, and lend, hoping for nothing again, and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil." Kindness must grace the Christian heart (Col. 3:12). Kindness must be added to the Christian's faith (II Pet. 1:7), and must be borne as a fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22). Paul sums it all up in Ephesians 4:2 by saying, "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ hath forgiven you."

I like the words of Stephen Grellet who wrote:

"I shall not pass this way again. Any good things that I can do, or any kindness that I can show, let me do it now! Let me not defer it or neglect it. For I shall not pass this way again."

Finally, love envieth not. Other renderings of this phrase would be these. "Love does not look against or eye with displeasure the prosperity or advantage of other. Love is not characterized by selfish zeal. It does not boil over with jealousy."

Envy has always been a major problem with man. We, for example, envy the rich. David did! He said in Psalm 73:3, "For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw prosperity of the wicked." So often we envy the sinner. Solomon declares. "Let not thine heart envy sinners..." (Prov. 23:17).

We must get rid of envy! Job 5:2 declares, "...envy slayeth the silly one." Pilate knew that the chief priests delivered up Jesus because of envy (Mark 15:10). Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery because of envy (Acts 7:9). Galatians 5:26 says, "let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another." We must put away envies! (I Pet. 2:1).

God's people will rejoice with those that rejoice and weep with those who weep! (Rom. 12:15).

Someone defined a love free from envy with these words:

"I love a thing that's fine,
Even when it is not mine,
And though it mine can never be,
Yet it delights and gladdens me."

Envy will damn our souls. Paul discusses the sins of the Gentiles in Romans chapter one and lists envy among them. He concludes in verse thirty-two by saying, they who do such are worthy of death. They cannot enter the kingdom of God (Gal. 5:19-21).

Dear readers, let us strive to be more loving by being more patient, kind, and less envious.

Love is truly the greatest thing in the world!

What Would Paul Say ?

Bill Dillion

While reading the religious announcements section of the

country newspaper recently, a number of striking things were noted. Among many of the religious activities were practices unheard of in the Bible; thus the question came to mind, "What would Paul say if he were here today?" Consider for instance the S-P-G-U-M-Church's announcement that they would be celebrating the "sacrament" of the Lord's Supper at the Sunday worship service. To begin with, Paul would experience puzzlement at such a name for a church; as the Holy Spirit guided him to call the Lord's body only such divinely approved names as "church of God" (I Cor. 1:2); or "Churches of Christ" (Rom. 16:16); or simply "the church" (Acts 20:28); etc. Perplexity no less greater would be felt to hear of sacrament Sunday because his God-approved activities included the meeting with the "disciples on the first day of the week to break bread" (Acts 20:7). The Lord's Supper was a weekly occurrence with Paul. In I Corinthians 11:26 the pen of Paul wrote regarding the partaking of the Lord's Supper, that "as often" as they did it they shewed the Lord's Death till he come. In I Corinthians 16:1, 2 he commands the coming together each first day of the week (literally, every first day of the week) thus showing the "as often" of the Lord's Supper. What would Paul say about sacrament Sunday? What has he already said in Holy Writ?

Another announcement tells of the district superintendent of the Kentucky district of the church of the N— coming to arrange a church conference. But where does the Word of God ever speak of "district superintendent"? Paul would quickly instruct that each local congregation was autonomous and elders or pastors (not preachers) of those congregations were to oversee their flock (Titus 1:5; Eph. 4:11; I Pet. 5:1, 2). Only after man "got a better idea" did the ecclesiastical hierarchies with district superintendents, bishops, synods, councils, etc. bring forth organizational changes, resulting in twentieth century bureaucratic monstrosities. But the Bible plan for church organization cannot be improved upon and every humanly devised structure is apostasy. What would Paul say about district superintendents and modern forms of church organization? What has he already said by the Holy Spirit's guidance?

The paper likewise announces the time of services of the L—church; but to ask What would Paul say about an organization paying lip service to the Lord and, at the same time, glorying in some mortal's name seems only fitting. Frankly, if Paul was their regular preacher they would never have learned to call themselves the L—church for Paul said, "For I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified" (I Cor. 2:2). Peter's teaching was the same when he said, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). Even religiously minded men have seen through the hypocrisy and vanity of such man glorying habits. For example, Martin Luther said,

"I pray you leave my name alone, and call not yourselves Lutherans, but Christians. Who is Luther? My doctrine is not mine. I have not been crucified for anyone. St. Paul would not any call themselves after Paul; nor of Peter, but of Christ. How then, does it benefit me a miserable bag of dust and ashes, to give my name to the children of God? Cease, my dear friends, to cling to these party names and distinctions: away with all; and let us call ourselves only Christians after him from whom our doctrine comes." (The Life of Luther, by Stork, p. 289).

Just as striking are the statements of one of the greatest Baptist preachers who ever lived, Charles Spurgeon,

"I say of the Baptist name, let it perish, but let Christ's name last forever. I look forward with pleasure to the day when there will not be a Baptist living. I hope they will soon perish; but let Christ's name endure forever." Spurgeon Memorial Library. Vol. I, p. 168.

Religious people everywhere should divest themselves of God-dishonoring, man glorifying names which have never, nor will ever, save a soul.

"Party names they lay aside
And cast away your broken cistern;

Christ the Lamb, the church the bride;
 Then take no other name but Christian
 Brides, they take the husband's name;
 Nor would he sanction any other;
 Why should we not do the same?
 What do you say contending brother?"

Then other churches are featuring their choirs and quartets with organists and pianists giving their artificial stimulation to service already encumbered with ego pampering titles for preachers such as. "Reverend, Doctor..... .." Could anyone believe for a moment that the Reverend, Doctor Stephen will speak on "How to Win Friends and influence People" at the morning service in the absence of His Holiness, Right Reverend Paul who was normally scheduled to speak on "It's Your Personal Beliefs That Matter—Not Doctrine"? or that, Doctor Titus will be directing the Cretan Choir and will give special selections on the flute and harp entitled "My Empire Tis of Thee" and "Rome, the Beautiful?" The fleet wings of man's imagination have never soared to such heights of folly as to accept such nonsense. The scripture is plain to pinpoint the instrument in worship (the human heart, Eph. 5:19); the singers (congregation, Eph 5:19); and the songs (psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, Col. 3:16).

Be it clearly stated—we don't read in the Word of God of special sacrament Sundays or of district superintendents or of the Lord's church being fettered with any mortal's name, nor of church choirs, quartets and mechanical instruments being used to worship diety. Moreover, these practices and scores of others, having no more authority than the whim of man, are undeniably, unexceptionally and dilusively false. Let us cling to the imperishable and unchanging apostolic injunction, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God" (I Pet. 4:11). We invite and encourage others to come out of the pits of denominationalism and stand with us on higher and firmer apostolic ground; the man of our counsel being only God's word. The Bible speaks. Who will hear?

The Pattern Of Prayer

Grady M. Miller

The New Testament is a book of patterns. Scripture reveals unto man God's perfect plan concerning such matters as the plan of salvation, the nature, work and worship of the church, and the ideal home. Just so, the New Testament reveals the Lord's teachings on who may pray, how to pray, and what we should pray for.

WHO MAY PRAY?

Our God, who "hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Eph. 1:3), has given unto His children the blessing and privilege of prayer. This tremendous blessing is reserved for His children alone. While it is not uncommon to hear denominational preachers exhort the alien sinner to "pray the sinner's prayer and receive Christ," the fact remains that the sinner has no such prayer!

Sin separates one from the favour of the Lord and renders his prayer ineffectual. Joshua's prayer (Josh. 7:6-11), as well as Israel's (Isa. 59:1-2) was unanswered not because God could not answer it, but because God would not answer it. Indeed, "the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil" (I Pet. 3:12). Solomon declared in the long ago, "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination" (Prov. 28:9).

Prayer must be made unto God in the name of His Son Jesus Christ (John 16:23, 24, 26, 27; 14:13, 14). Does this characterize the alien's prayer? The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much (Jas. 5:16); are there any righteous outside the Lord's family?

While it is certainly true that many of the Lord's blessings

are enjoyed by all men (Matthew 5:45), the privilege of prayer is not such a blessing; it is a blessing reserved for the obedient child of God.

HOW TO PRAY?

Jesus was very much concerned with the "mechanics" or the "how" of prayer. His very first recorded sermon included instructions on how to pray (Matthew 6). He taught His disciples how to pray, giving them a model prayer (Luke 11). The Scriptures give us ample instructions as to how we are to address our petitions to the Lord.

(1) The prayer must be asked in faith, believing all the while that the Lord will answer it. Jesus assured us, "All things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive" (Matt. 21:22). James encouraged the saints of his day to ask the Lord for wisdom; their petition, however, was to be asked "in faith, nothing wavering" (Jas. 1:5-8). This attitude of faith is in marked contrast to the way that many Christians are today, who instead of heeding the Lord's instructions seem to follow Mark Twain's advice: "It is best to read the weather forecasts before we pray for rain."

(2) The prayer must be according to the Lord's will. Again, James observed that some in this day did not have their prayers answered because they asked for the wrong things (Jas. 4:3). The Christian's promise is that "if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him" (I John 5:14, 15). Jesus is the perfect example of one praying according to the Father's will; in Gethsemane He prayed, "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matt. 26:39; cf. 6:10b).

(3) The prayer must be fervent, or earnest; "The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (Jas. 5:16). Our prayers must be sincere, springing deep from within our heart and soul. Adam Clarke has well said, "Prayer requires more of the heart than of the tongue."

(4) The prayer must be made in the name of Jesus Christ, our mediator (John 14:13, 14; I Tim. 2:5). Many prayers uttered today at secular events (football games, banquets, political gatherings) simply end with an "Amen" lest some visiting Jew or infidel be offended. The Christian, however will offer up his prayers in the name of the Lord Jesus.

FOR WHAT SHOULD WE PRAY?

The petitions contained in the Lord's model prayer (Matt. 6; Luke 11) may be divided into two major categories: spiritual concerns and material (or physical) concerns. Thus, it is altogether proper for the Christian to pray that his spiritual and material needs be provided for by a loving Heavenly Father.

The child of God will offer up these prayers related to spiritual matters. The appeal for the forgiveness of sins will be a daily prayer (I John 1:9; 2:1-2); A petition for wisdom from above (Jas. 1:5-6; 3:17); Supplications for help in times of temptation, so that we may be delivered (cf. Matt. 6:3; 26:41; I Cor. 10:13); Prayers for more labourers in the harvest (Matt. 9:38) and for the success of the Lord's church are clearly in order.

Some of our needs in this life that the Christian may pray for include: Daily substance, which will include food, clothing, shelter, and other needs (Matt. 6:11); Peaceful lives (I Tim. 2:1, 2); Help in times of affliction (Jas. 5:13).

In short, "in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God" (Philippians 4:6).

Faith Only

Clifford Dixon

It is very popular for people to say that all a person has to do

to be saved is to just believe. Such people usually turn to Romans four concerning justification of Abraham. "What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness" (Rom. 4:1-5). We ask the question, What works are under consideration here? He is showing Abraham's justification before and apart from the law of Moses. "For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith" (Rom. 4:13). We pose the question, What about Abraham's obedience? Concerning his call and sojourn it is stated, "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went" (Heb. 11:8). He had an obedient faith, here. Also concerning the offering up of Isaac, "Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only" (James 2:21-24). Those believing in salvation by faith only are hard put to answer the plain statements in James two. It is rather one justification—but two kinds of works that are spoken of; Works of obedience being the subject of James two while works of the law of Moses being under consideration in Romans four. Concerning the latter Paul had emphatically stated, "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin." (Rom. 3:20).

Proponents of salvation by faith only use the blind man of John nine as an example. In John 9:35-37 Jesus asked him, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" to which he answered, "Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?" Jesus told him he was

talking to the Son of God; and the Scriptures state, "And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him." They say that just as soon as he knew who Jesus was he believed and was saved. This man had already shown a disposition to obey. He had been told to wash in the pool of Siloam, which he did and was restored his sight. This is no example for salvation by faith only.

Proponents of the doctrine of faith only use Paul as an example of the same when he said, he was an one born out of due time when the Lord appeared to him on the road to Damascus (I Cor. 15:8). This does not teach that he was saved the moment the Lord appeared to him. In fact he was told of the Lord, "Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do" (Acts 9:6). Something a person must do is certainly a necessity to his salvation. Later Paul reported that Ananias told him, upon coming to him in the city, "Arise. and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). This would be a strange command indeed if Saul had already been saved three days before on the road to Damascus! No, Saul was not saved by faith only, but he spoke of the importance of baptism and included himself saying, "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4).

Titus 3:3-5 does not teach salvation by faith only either. He denied that it was "by works of righteousness which we have done," but he said it was "by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." Washing of regeneration according to Bible scholars means baptism. The renewing of the Holy Ghost refers to His influencing us through the word. So again this does not teach salvation by faith only.

Did You Know?

That

1. The Bible is a collection of 66 books?
2. The Bible is divided into two divisions: Old and New Testament?
3. The Old Testament called the Law of Moses was given only to Jews or the nation of Israel?
4. The Gentiles (everybody not a Jew) were never required to obey the Old Testament?
5. The Old Testament law was temporary even for the Jews and was abolished when Jesus died on the Cross? Col. 2:14; Eph. 2:15-16; Gal. 3:24.
6. The New Testament should be our sole guide in religion whether we be Jews or Gentile? II Tim. 3:15-17; II Peter 1:3.
7. Jesus promised before He died to establish His church? Matt. 16:18.
8. He did establish it upon the first Pentecost day following his resurrection from the dead? Acts 2.
9. The apostles taught that His church was the same as His body? Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:23.
10. Paul taught that there is just one body (Church)? Eph. 4:4; I Cor. 12:13, 20.
11. In Acts chapter two is a record of the first ones becoming members of the Church of Christ?
12. Those people then as believers in Jesus Christ were told to

repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of their sins? Acts 2:37-38.

13. The Lord then added those people who thus obeyed Him to His church? Acts 2:41-47.
14. In the book of Acts we have records of thousands of people believing, repenting of sins, confessing Jesus before man, and being baptized for the remission of their sins who were then added by the Lord to HIS Church? Acts 2, 8, 9, 10, 16.
15. We do not have in the Bible a single example of anyone joining the Lord's Church. They simply obeyed Him and He added them to it?
16. The Bible teaches that baptism (not baptism by itself but preceded by genuine faith) saves us? I Peter 3:21.
17. In the New Testament days a sinner wanted to be saved as a believer in the Lord Jesus came to water, went down into the water, and therein was baptized, and that Paul calls it a burial? Acts 8:36-39; Rom. 6:4.
18. In the days of the apostles the same steps that led a person to salvation also put him into the Lord's Church? Acts 2:41-47. The saved are added to the Church?
19. When you thus obey the Lord's commands and are saved from past sins you are to continue steadfastly as a Christian? Acts 2:42.
20. If you today will obey the same commands as people back then obeyed, (believe, repent, confess Jesus before man, be baptized) the Lord will add you to the same church, The Lord's church, as he added them? If not, why not?
21. The Church of Christ today is calling Bible things by Bible names, and doing Bible things in Bible ways, and thus trying to be just like the Church of Christ taught in the New Testament?

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