

Rom. 14:19 So then let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another.

THE LENEXA EDIFIER

John 8:32

"And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free"

May 22, 2022

A Godly Man in Wicked Surroundings

Bill Hall

Elijah was a man who reached true greatness in the Lord's service. He was always ready to go where God would send him (**I Kings 18:1; 19:15**); to pray whenever prayer was needed (**I Kings 17:20, 21; 18:36, 37**), and to confront evil whenever confrontation was necessary (**I Kings 18:17-24; 21:17-19**). He was translated without seeing death, and he, along with Moses, was chosen to appear with the Lord on the mount of transfiguration.

The remarkable thing about Elijah is that he attained this greatness while living in a wicked and hostile environment. Had he lived in Judah during the righteous reign of Hezekiah or Josiah, we might not be surprised at Elijah's attainments. But he lived instead in Israel during the wicked reign of Ahab. He was subjected to the cruel intents of Jezebel. He was under constant harassment and threat of death. He became so discouraged at one point that he asked to die, but he never denied his God.

In this wicked environment Elijah was able to influence others. The widow of Zarephath was blessed through Elijah (**I Kings 17:8-24**). The multitudes on Mount Carmel were led to cry, "*The Lord, He is God!*" through his courageous efforts (**I Kings 18:39**). Elisha, his successor, must have been greatly influenced by him. And even Ahab was brought to humility on one occasion, clothing himself in sackcloth as a result of Elijah's rebuke (**I Kings 21:27-29**). The message of Elijah is clear. You can live a godly life and influence others for good in a wicked and hostile environment.

When one hears the excuses people make today, it is obvious that Elijah's message is badly needed in this generation. People excuse their failure to teach others

the gospel with, "People are so prejudiced around here they just won't listen"; when the truth is, little effort has been made. If they are approached about their ungodly conduct, they explain that "You just don't know how terrible the people are that I have to work around every day". If their children go astray their explanation is, "Our children are faced with pressures that we didn't have growing up". Such statements, repeated often enough, become to many a "license" to do wrong and a salve to soothe their troubled consciences.

We must throw aside our excuses and make up our minds to do right. Elijah could serve God in wicked surroundings. And so can we.

Bill Hall

DOY MOYER

We often hear that we ought to be "colorblind." I get that sentiment, and I think good motives lie behind it because the intention is to say that we ought to treat all people the same. However, if we are not careful, this can do an injustice to the fact that God has made, within humanity, all the colors and variations that we see (**Acts 17:26**). God did not make a colorless humanity, and we need to appreciate that. There is beauty to be found in the variety. This implies that we learn to respect ethnic differences and honor the fact that there are cultural preferences (I'm not talking here about what is sinful).

Christians should have no issue here, as should be recognized by Paul's efforts to "*become all things to all people,*" explicitly within a context of teaching Jews and Gentiles. "*I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may*

share with them in its blessings” (1 Cor 9:23; see vv. 19-23). Paul honored the differences without doing what was sinful. We can do the same.

The largest threat of division among early Christians was between Jews and Gentiles. Should the Gentiles have to be circumcised to become Christians? Did they essentially need to give up being Gentiles in order to first become Jews so that they could follow Christ? As **Acts 15** shows, the answer was unequivocally, “no!” Jews can still be Jews and Gentiles can still be Gentiles. One did not have to become the other in order to follow Christ. What neither could do was force another law or culture upon the other. At the same time, neither could they continue in what was sinful. Gentiles could not remain pagan and still be Christians. They had to distinguish between what was sinful and what was an allowable liberty (**cf. Rom 14; 1 Cor 8, 10**). Jews could still circumcise their children, but they could not require it of others as a matter of salvation.

Even though ethnic and cultural differences between Jew and Gentile remained, they were still to become one in Christ (**Eph 2:11-22**). Seeking unity in Christ was vital. Jews could personally continue some of their practices as a liberty (e.g., the Sabbath) without forcing that practice on Gentiles. Gentiles could eat certain meats without forcing that upon conscientious Jews (I believe this the major issue in **Romans 14**). They could respect their cultural distinctions on the one hand while becoming united in Christ on the other hand and even be willing to give up their liberties at times for the sake of others. Yet insofar as their standing before God was concerned, there was no difference (**cf. Gal 3:28**).

This can be difficult due to the fact that we can sometimes conflate cultural issues with matters of faith and doctrine. We need to distinguish carefully what is a cultural and allowable liberty from that which is sinful and against godly principles. But, and here’s what I really want to stress, let us understand that various ethnicities, backgrounds, and languages being united in Christ is a magnificent testimony to the power of God through Christ. This was God’s plan all along (**Rev 5:9**). By honoring the variations, we highlight the unity we have in Christ. And by highlighting that unity, we shine a light on what God did and thereby glorify Him. It’s all about what brings God glory.

Let us honor the variation while also coming together in Christ. These are not mutually exclusive, but are a powerful witness to what the blood of Christ can do for all of us.

Evolution In Action?

A recent news article told of a new hybrid shark found in the waters off Australia. Scientists explained that the local Australian black-tip shark has mated with its global counterpart, the common black-tip shark. Jess Morgan, a researcher from the University of Queensland said that this is “very surprising because no one has ever seen shark hybrids before” and “this is not a common occurrence by any stretch of the imagination.” The new discovery is said to be a potential sign that sharks are adapting to cope with ‘climate change.’ Morgan went on to declare that “this is evolution in action.”

Those who deny God’s work in the creation of the universe and everything in it (including all life forms) may think that this delivers a blow against the faith of Bible believers. Nothing could be further from the truth. No one denies that species adapt to their environment. Abundant evidence has been available to prove this long before the news of hybrid sharks was announced. This is called ‘specific evolution’, or evolution within a species. All agree that this happens. What Bible believers deny, and what science has never come close to proving, is the general theory of evolution. What this unproved theory claims is that all life sprang from non-living matter, and that all the myriad of life forms seen on earth today evolved from a single common source.

Notice in this recent shark discovery that the known law of biogenesis (life comes from life, and living things produce after their own kind) is still working. In this case living sharks mated to produce life. The new type of shark was NOT the result of ‘spontaneous generation’ of life from non-living matter – which the general theory of evolution requires. AND, the new life form was still a shark, not a cat, not even a catfish!

Nothing in this new discovery challenges anything we know about God and His marvelous creation.

by Greg Gwin

Do Not Consent with Sinners – Don Wright

Solomon wrote, *“My son, if sinners entice you, do not consent.”* No one in the world should take these words more seriously than Christians. To consent with sinners is to walk according to the flesh. It is to live carnally, ignoring the exhortations of the scriptures. Through the Word of God, the Spirit urges us to not make friends of the world, let alone consent with them.

continued on page 3

continued from page 2

1 John 2:15 (ESV) 15 *Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*

James 4:4 (ESV) 4 *You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore, whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.*

Romans 12:2 (ESV) 2 *Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.*

In all these passages, the “world” involves more than people. It encompasses anything contrary to the will of God, that is, the realm of unrighteousness over which the devil rules (**2 Corinthians 4:4**). The ungodly occupy this realm and live according to its rules. Why would anyone who claims to be a Christian take advice from or consent with such a person? As James said, to do so is to make oneself an enemy of God.

If you are a Christian, you must be secure with who you are, and understand the value of what you are in Christ. Children of God who consent with sinners are usually those who are too insecure to stand alone, not realizing that we are never really alone as long as God is with us, and that He is always with us when we decide to please Him by doing His will. Jesus serves as our greatest example of this.

John 8:29 (ESV) 29 *And he who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to him.*

This is the key to a life of fellowship with God—striving to always do what is pleasing to Him. We may not achieve this perfectly as our Savior did, but we can make it the practice of our lives. When we do this, we will not consent with sinners, but, instead, we will be appalled by their lives and expose their evil ways, not join them.

Ephesians 5:11 (ESV) 11 *Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them.*

Let us be the kind of Christians who do not consent with sinners just to be popular with the world, but rather, are secure enough to know that if we are pleasing to God, we do not need to worry about what the world thinks of us. As you wind down for the night, think about these things.

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We believe in worshiping and serving the Lord as He has instructed in His word.



Did you know the Bible teaches water baptism is for the remission of sins? Read Acts 2:38; 22:16

Did you know that the forgiveness of sins is necessary to be added to the church or to be a part of the kingdom? Read Colossians 1:13,14; 1 Peter 2:9

Did you know the Bible teaches those who are saved are added to the church, therefore membership in the church is something all who are saved will have? Read Acts 2:47

“and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.” (Ephesians 1:19–23)

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.

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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