

LENEXA EDIFIER

"and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:32)

November 5, 2023

WHAT BURNS IN YOUR HEART?

Jim Stauffer

They said to one another, "Were not our hearts burning within us while He was speaking to us on the road, while He was explaining the Scriptures to us?"

(Luke 24:32) On this occasion two men had walked with the Lord unaware of who He was as they walked to Emmaus. Jesus had raised from the grave and only a few knew it at this time. As they walked, He joined them and their conversation about the recent events in Jerusalem. Their conversation was about *...Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word in the sight of 'god and all the people, and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to the sentence of death, and crucified Him.* **(Luke 24:19,20)** They were sad because they thought this Jesus might be the One to redeem Israel. They were confused because they visited his grave and found it empty.

Jesus then began to explain to them from Old Testament prophecy that the plan of God all along was for the Christ, the Anointed One, the Messiah to suffer death and to enter glory following that suffering **(Luke 24:25-27)**. Later as they ate with Him their eyes were opened and they realized it was Jesus with whom they had conversed. That is when they reflected on how it felt to hear Him teach them from the Scriptures. We might ask ourselves how we feel when hearing the word of the Lord as we study Scriptures. It is a special thing to receive communication from God Himself.

So special that even when that communication leads us to suffer persecution or any rejection from others, we cling to it more closely. Jeremiah, who suffered greatly at the hands of his contemporaries in Judah lamented God's use of him to carry a message of punishment for Judah for her sin of rebellion against God. He was treated poorly for the message he carried and yet he found it difficult not to speak the word of the Lord as he had been called to do. Listen to his dilemma, *O LORD, You have deceived me and I was deceived; You have overcome me and prevailed. I have become a laughingstock all day long; Everyone mocks me. For each time I speak, I cry aloud; I proclaim violence and destruction, Because for me the word of the LORD has*

resulted In reproach and derision all day long. But if I say, "I will not remember Him Or speak anymore in His name," Then in my heart it becomes like a burning fire Shut up in my bones; And I am weary of holding it in, And I cannot endure it. **(Jeremiah 20:7-9)**

His word is life to each and everyone who will hear it. He is the way, the truth and the life. We should draw closer and closer to Him as we read His word and take it into our hearts. And any temptation to reject it or even fail to speak it to others should create serious pain in our hearts since He loved us and died for us **(Ephesians 2:4,5; Romans 5:6-10)**.

The Solutions for Unity

Chuck Bartlett

When it comes to solving the religious divisions that exist today, there must be some common ground to work from. In this article we will try and establish those essential truths required to achieve unity. If there is no agreement on these fundamental facts, all discussions on various subjects will end in a stalemate. Here are some of those areas that must be agreed upon in order to move forward.

There is a God

Why engage in any religious discussion if one, or both parties question the existence of God? Without this agreement, in the minds of those discussing, it is just one person's opinion against another. If that's the case, why should either one yield to the other? The fact is, God exists **(Gen. 1:1)**, and He created everything we see, so that we are without excuse **(Rom. 1:20)**. No religious discussion should move forward until this truth is first agreed upon.

God spoke

Mankind needs to acknowledge that God needed to speak. Why create man and then allow him to guess as to what God thinks. Sadly, that's exactly what is going on in the world today. You hear people say, "I think God would accept this, or that." However, even with people, no one can know the mind of another unless they

speak. The same goes with God (**1 Cor. 2:11**). God needed to speak, and so He did (**Heb. 1:1-2**).

The Bible is Inspired by God

When people want to claim that God has spoken directly to them, using any Bible texts for discussion, will be a waste of time. Everyone needs to know that all scripture is inspired by God (**II Tim. 3:16-17**). If that is truly agreed upon, then all other sources of authority are rejected. That includes feelings, traditions, experiences, and creeds of men. Reason being, the inspired word informs us that there is no other source of truth (**Jude 3; Gal. 1:6-9**). This is how unity can be reached.

We are under the New Testament

There is yet another hurdle that must be overcome before a profitable discussion can take place. You will often hear people who believe in God and His word, think that now everything is set to engage in a healthy Bible study. This is not the case. Going back to the Old Testament to establish laws for us to obey today, is to go against what the inspired word teaches. Jesus nailed the Old Law to the cross and brought us the gospel, which is for all people (**Col. 2:14; Gal. 5:1-4; 3:26-29; Mk. 16:15**).

The scriptures must be rightly divided

There also needs to be mutual understanding of how you handle the scriptures in order to have a profitable study. For example, if someone takes a passage out of its context and contradicts other clear Bible verses, we have a problem. Then there is the danger of trying to justify something by saying, "It doesn't say you can't", only to hear the other side say, "It doesn't say you can!" There needs to be a standard by which we handle the word of God.

The ways to ascertain the truth is by direct commands, approved examples, and necessary conclusions. As an example, for necessary conclusions, one can safely conclude that when the Lord says to go preach the gospel (**Mk. 16:15**), it is implied you can walk, go by ship, or horseback, etc. When it comes to establishing truth, we must also respect general and specific authority. This means, when Christians are told to sing (**Eph. 5:19**), it doesn't matter how many songs we sing – that is a general statement. Yet, when it says to sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, those are specifics, thus eliminating secular songs. Let us remember that by establishing these few standards, unity can be reached if there is a desire to know the truth.

I don't want to imply that if you talk with someone and

they don't agree with one, or more of the points, that you shouldn't have a discussion with them. The point of the article is really establishing what should be discussed first. Let's think this through.

If someone asks you a Bible question, your first instinct is to give a Bible answer. However, if you ask the person, "Oh, do you believe in God?" If they say no, then obviously they don't believe the Bible is God's word. So why would they be asking the question? Probably, to see if they agree with what you say. You see, some people do what God says, because they "think" that's the right call. But what happens when they disagree? To them, it's no big deal, because they don't believe in God in the first place.

If someone doesn't believe in God, start right there. Ask if they would like to study the evidences that God exists. This leads us to the next point. Did God speak? If you are asked a Bible question, you ask, "Will you accept what the Bible has to say?" They might not think the Bible is infallible, or that it's the only source of authority in the religious realm. This would mean that if they believe in God, perhaps a study of proofs that the Bible is the inspired word of God, could be arranged.

Personally speaking, from the many Bible studies I have had, perhaps what I needed to establish more than any of the others, was the differences between the Old Testament and the New Testament. You will often find religious people who want to engage in religious discussions, have little understanding of the differences between the two testaments. Once that is established, unity isn't that far off.

Learning how to study the scriptures is just as important as doing the studying. The Bible is not full of general principles. It's the specifics that many in the religious realm struggle with. Learning proper reasoning is the key. Unless you are on the same page with this, any discussion will not end well.

"THE WORK OF THE CHURCH" #1

Any attempt to change the arrangement God has given for the accomplishing of His will must be challenged. Human institutions built and maintained for the purpose of supplementing the pattern God has given for the organization, work, and worship of the church are not permitted. We have no right to change the work of the church any more than we have a right to change the revelation of God's will concerning that work

(Galatians 1:6-9). Can the work God has given His people to do be carried out without any kind of centralized oversight? Although the following excerpt was written over fifty years ago, it still states well the basic problems faced in the matter of institutionalism.

Does a congregation have the right to assume more than it can do? Since brethren have begun to establish institutions they have vacillated between one plan and another of operation neither of which the scriptures give hint. If the Lord had intended that His work be done on a bigger scale than could be handled by the local church He would have designed a bigger organization. (The Gospel Guardian, 32, March-April 1936; The Problem of Organized Cooperation, by O.C. Lambert).

The church was planned, built, and continues to be guided by the wisdom of God **(Ephesians 3:10-11)**. We must take heed how we build as we respect the pattern God has given **(1 Corinthians 3:10-11; Hebrews 8:1-5)**. The church can accomplish its mission in the way God has prescribed.

The only organizational structure revealed in the New Testament is the local church. *"Paul and Timothy, servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus that are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons"* **(Philippians 1:1)**. Each local congregation with its own elders, deacons, and members functions autonomously in accomplishing the work God authorized. Christ is the head of the church **(Ephesians 1:22-23)**. Elders exercise oversight only within the parameters of the local congregation **(1 Peter 5:1-4)** as they honor the Head. Constant appeals for a "sponsoring church" to control the work of an evangelist or a church in the "mission field" must overlook the fact that there is no authority for such. Often the sponsoring church takes the oversight of a work, wherever it may be, but has no intention of putting any of its own monies into that work; it then appeals constantly for funds to do a work that it cannot do itself!

Randy Harshbarger

A Letter From a Friend

"I have rejoiced in the way of Your testimonies, As much as in all riches. I will meditate on Your precepts And regard Your ways. I shall delight in Your statutes; I shall not forget Your word... Your testimonies also are my delight; They are my counselors... The law of Your

mouth is better to me Than thousands of gold and silver pieces... My soul languishes for Your salvation; I wait for Your word... O how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day... Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path." **(Psalm 119:14-16, 24, 72, 81, 97, 105)**

What does the Bible mean to you? Are the words of the text those of a religious fanatic? Why was the Psalmist so devoted to God's Word? Why did he meditate on it day and night **(Psalm 1:2)**? Perhaps the answer can be illustrated by these words of a young lady in love: "Yesterday I received a letter from one to whom I have given my heart and devoted my life. I freely confess to you that I have read that letter five times...not because I did not understand it at the first reading, nor because I expect to commend myself to the author by frequent reading of his letter. It was not with me a question of duty, but simply one of pleasure. I read it because I am devoted to the one who wrote it."

Those who are deeply devoted to God are anxious to read His Word. There's always a quiver of excitement when we spot the familiar handwriting of a friend in the day's mail. We read the letter immediately! Even pressing matters are pushed aside until the message has been absorbed. We never leave a prized note unopened for several days. Apply the principle! Doesn't neglect of God's message to man point an accusing finger at a lack of love for Him?

During earlier centuries copies of the Bible were not easily acquired. Before the advent of the printing press the Scriptures were laboriously copied by hand. It took ten months to reproduce a single copy. Obviously these volumes were beyond the financial reach of most. There were also times when Christians were pressed by persecution; it was considered criminal to possess a copy of the Scriptures; Bibles were burned by tyrannical rulers.

Benjamin Franklin's autobiography relates how, in his boyhood home, the family Bible was fastened to the underside of a chair. The children were stationed at the windows to watch for intruders while the chair was turned over in the lap of his father and the Scriptures read to the family.

Pick up your Bible...look at it. You probably had no difficulty purchasing it...printed on the finest *India Paper*, sewed with nylon, covered with quality *pin seal Morocco*. To have the Bible so easily available is a great blessing; to fail to appreciate and read it is a great evil. Remember, "Those who do not read have little advantage over those who cannot read."
-- **Joe Barnett (From POWERLINE, October, 1977)**

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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Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship
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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