

LENEXA EDIFIER

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

October 13, 2024

The Flesh Needs the Spirit

by Jim Stauffer

Jesus answered them and said, “Truly, truly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. “Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you, for on Him the Father, God, has set His seal.”

Therefore they said to Him, “What shall we do, so that we may work the works of God?” Jesus answered and said to them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent.” (John 6:26–29) These folks are such a perfect example of people today who call on God for His blessings when in trouble or suffering, but then go back to pleasing themselves when the difficulty is gone.

The words and deeds of the Spirit are from the source of power that has granted life and such life abundantly (**John 10:10 cf. 5:40**). The flesh craves life. Of course it craves the life it enjoys here on earth. A life that is limited and will end in a relatively short period of time (**Psalms 90:10**). The abundant life Jesus promises is, of course, eternal life when this life is over. He speaks of the soul of man living forever, not our bodies (**Matthew 16:26**).

Of course this life is granted to a soul that is dead in sin (**Ephesians 2:1-3**) when one does what Jesus identifies as the *work of God* in our text, believing in God. This is an obstacle to the flesh because it has not yet learned to truly put others' interests above its own (**Phil 2:1-4**). The Scriptures clearly teach us that faith, the faith Jesus speaks of, is believing so completely that we act according to His wishes. James uses both Abraham and Rahab to illustrate how one behaves when he believes.

The fleshly concept of life is a fool's errand as we “cannot have our cake and eat it too.” We cannot indulge the flesh and enjoy the benefits granted by the Spirit of God (**2 Peter 2:10**). There are so many examples of those who lived life devoted to self that we really have to work at it to overlook them. Take, for

instance, the story of the rich man and Lazarus. What was the outcome at the end of the short earthly life? The rich man enjoyed the flesh until he died and Lazarus suffered in the flesh until he died. Of course, the roles were reversed in Hades as they awaited the final judgment (**Luke 16:19-31**).

Both Jeremiah and the Lord addressed the problem of refusing to see because we do not want to accept the truth. *“Now hear this, O foolish and senseless people, Who have eyes but do not see; Who have ears but do not hear. (Jeremiah 5:21)* Jesus told the Laodiceans their fleshly desires had left them blind to the truth, *“Because you say, “I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing,” and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked, (Revelation 3:17)*

It is the flesh of the sinner that rules his heart when he rejects the clear teaching of Scripture. It is the flesh of the child of God when he chooses to please himself rather than honor the One Who redeemed him from his wretched life of sin. Yes, we want what the Spirit can give, therefore we must be led by the Spirit if we are to receive those blessings.

ALL THINGS ARE LAWFUL

1 Corinthians 10:23-33

“All things are lawful; but not all things are expedient. All things are lawful; but not all things edify” (v.23). At first glance, Paul's statement about all things being lawful gives us concern. His statement must be understood in context. Clearly, not all things were lawful or allowed by Paul. The Corinthians had repudiated all kinds of sins when they obeyed the gospel (**1 Corinthians 6:9-11**). If all things were lawful, why did they have to give up fornication, adultery, homosexuality, etc.? Paul is speaking about things that were morally indifferent; he makes an immediate application to eating meats used in idolatrous sacrifices.

"Let no man seek his own, but each his neighbor's good" (v.24). Our attitudes and actions as Christians must help others grow and mature in their service to God. Selfishness does not help others; it promotes self. *"Whatever is sold in the shambles, eat, asking no question for conscience sake" (v.25).* *Shambles* refers to the marketplace where meat was sold. Since the meat had intrinsic value, that is, it could be safely eaten; if the Corinthians went ahead and ate, they were not worshiping an idol.

"For the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof" (v.26). The meat purchased in the marketplace was part of the earth that the Lord created. The Corinthians were to receive such with thanksgiving. *"If one of them that believe not biddeth you to a feast, and ye are disposed to go; whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no question for conscience sake" (v.27).* When you sit down to eat (in the home of an unbeliever in this case), don't ask: Where did this meat come from? This was simply a social occasion and had nothing to do with idolatry. *"But if any man says unto you, This hath been offered in sacrifice, eat not, for his sake that showed it, and for conscience sake" (v.28).* Who is the *"any man?"* Is it the host? Is it a Christian, weak or strong? Regardless, the Christian was to refrain from eating the meat because the conscience of another is involved.

"Conscience, I say, not thine own, but the other's; for why is my liberty judged by another conscience?" (v.29). This is not the conscience of the strong Christian who understood the true application of the meat. This could be a pagan; so, in this case do not endorse idolatry by eating. This could refer to a weakened brother who was led to eat because of your actions; he ate and violated his conscience. Paul says that our eating might lay a stumbling block before the *"any man."* *"If I partake with thankfulness, why am I evil spoken of for that for which I give thanks?" (v.30).* Paul knew that if he did eat he would be spoken against. *"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God (v.31).* Will my actions glorify God? Will someone turn away from God because of me? *"Give no occasion of stumbling, either to Jews, or to Greeks, or to the church of God" (v.32).* We must always seek to be without offense to others. We must not cause one to stumble.

"Even as I also please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of the many, that they

may be saved" (v.33). Paul was willing to waive his rights in order to save others; their salvation was more important than personal liberty. No personal advantage is worth the loss of one precious soul. Or is it?

Randy Harshbarger

PREACHING ABOUT BAPTISM

By Dennis Abernathy

No subject has been discussed and debated more than baptism. Is it essential to salvation or is it not? Is baptism immersion, sprinkling, or simply pouring water on one? Are infants to be baptized? Is one to be baptized because he is saved, or in order to be saved? The questions are almost endless. Therefore, many just decide the subject of baptism is too controversial, and they do not preach or teach on the subject at all.

For example, let me tell you a little story. Preachers in a small town proposed a meeting in which all the preachers would take alternate turns to preach. A certain gospel preacher, had not been consulted on the arrangement, so he called the other preachers to request his turn to preach. He was informed that an agreement had been made that the subject of baptism would not be mentioned-that they had agreed to preach Christ and say nothing about baptism. The preacher accepted the conditions and agreed to preach without mentioning the word baptism. It was agreed, and he announced in advance his subject was "What Must I do to be Saved."

People came from all over to hear him preach. He preached with such animation and eloquence on salvation, and the love of God, that brought salvation to man through Jesus Christ. When he reached the point of the question-What must I do to be saved? he turned to **Mark 16: 15-16** and read the words of Christ: *"Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and doeth that thing I promised not to mention, shall be saved."* He then read **Acts 2: 38:** *"Repent, and do that thing I promised not to mention, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins."* And he proceeded to read every verse in the New Testament on baptism, and called it that thing I promised not to mention!

Isn't it strange how many people and preachers will detour around such a plain and positive command of Jesus and His apostles; so simple to be understood

and performed, so easy to accept and obey, and so much emphasized in the New Testament? What about you, my friend? Would you like to study this biblical subject in order to understand what the New Testament says about it?

The Churches of Christ Are Different: Prayer

As one visits congregations of the Churches of Christ, they will notice that prayer is offered by many different men of the congregation and not just by the preacher. Also, no women lead prayer, as is the custom in many denominations. Each of these has scripture behind them and the differences they make are NOT trivial.

One should note that Jesus himself said God's house was to be *"a house of prayer for all nations"* in **Mark 11:17**. Prayer ought to be a noteworthy part of the worship of any group trying to be pleasing to God. Sadly, our secular and worldly society influences us to put a discount on prayer. Not so the Apostles who, in **Acts 6:4** said *"But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word"* putting it on a par with preaching. I am struck by Samuel, the last judge of Israel, who said he would not allow himself to sin by failing to pray for Israel, **1 Samuel 12:23**. Paul asked for the prayers of regular Christians in his letters and vouched his constant remembrance of them in prayer, **Romans 1:9 & 15:30** among others. Prayer is a vital part of the Christian armor, **Ephesians 6:18**. Every Christian wants their prayer heard by God and Peter reminds us in **1 Peter 3:7** that the husband's prayer is affected by how he treats his wife. Understanding the Golden Rule of **Matthew 7:12** reveals many situations where this may be applied!

So, why all men and not women leading prayer? Oddly enough both questions are addressed in the same verse, **1 Timothy 2:8** *"Therefore I want the men in every place to pray, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and dissension."* As we all know the English word "Men" or "Man" can refer to mankind, including both men and women. However, the Holy Spirit and the New Testament written in Greek and the word used here refers to 'males as opposed to females' and since he does not specify which man it must be open to all faithful Christian males and NOT JUST THE PREACHER!

Sadly, this approach to prayer is not acceptable for many 'modern' folks. Their attitude is summed up in the

adage, "I like it! I want it! And I aim to do it!" But remember the warning in **Proverbs 22:28** *"Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set."* If it was true of our earthly fathers, then how much more so for our Heavenly Father's landmark?

Cleveland Reddinger

Eugenics, 1

"Eugenics" isn't a word you hear much any more, but it stands for a depraved, diabolical, and deadly system that permeates our society.

The term was coined in the nineteenth century by an Englishman named Francis Galton. Eugenics is a combination of two Gr. words: eu, meaning "well" + genēs, meaning "born"—thus, well born. Galton used the term to describe a philosophy that sought to improve the genetic quality of the human population to advance the betterment of mankind. Specifically, he wanted to increase the number of people with superior intelligence. And how would he accomplish this? By better schools? a longer school year? teaching Greek and Latin in grade school? No, by selective breeding. Where did he get such an idea? From his cousin, Charles Darwin.

In *The Descent of Man*, Darwin endorsed Galton's ideas and argued that for the good of mankind, inferior individuals should be prevented from marrying lest their offspring supplant the better, more intelligent members of society.

In the twentieth century, this view was readily embraced by some of the intelligentsia on this side of the Atlantic, one of the most prominent being Margaret Sanger, who, to further the practice of eugenics, founded an organization still in existence today . . . known as Planned Parenthood.

Kenny Chumbley

Editor's Note:

This will be a series for the next few issues enabling us to see the hideous side of man making the decision of who should have life and who should not.

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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SERMON: WHO ARE YOU?

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