

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



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

December

29

2024

CHRISTIANS SOWING THE SEED

Jim Stauffer

Do we proudly carry the gospel to the lost?

When we view the first century Christians who are revealed to us in Scripture by the Holy Spirit, we see a people who are totally committed to faith in Jesus. It is when they follow Jesus we see them tested by society.

The apostles were continually arrested, beaten and harassed generally for preaching Jesus (**Acts 4&5**). Those who were taught by the apostles (**Acts 2:42**), were tormented to the point of being arrested and tried as criminals for their faith in Christ (**Acts 8:1-3**). This increased persecution followed the bold murder of Stephen for preaching Jesus in **Acts Chapter 7**. What is encouraging for us was their continued concern for others to hear about Jesus in order to be saved from their sins. They preached the word as they fled for safety (**Acts 8:4**).

One of the greatest testimonies to faith in Christ is when Saul of Tarsus was converted to the truth after seeing Jesus in a vision on the road to Damascus. The persecutor of Christians prior to his conversion became one of the most persecuted Christians after his conversion (**See Acts 9; 1 Timothy 1:12-16**).

We are told in secular history that every one of the apostles died for their faith in Christ with the possible exception of John who was exiled from society to the Island of Patmos where he received the Revelation of Jesus Christ reported to us as the final book of the New Testament. They died for their faith.

Now, I say all this to Christians who live today in societies that allow us to openly preach the gospel. Our persecution today comes usually in the form of

ridicule for being extremists about the Scriptures. Or simply by being ignored. We are simply a minor distraction to their pursuit of worldly pleasure.

How do we handle this is the question we must answer. Do we shrink in the face of such persecution or do we proceed in the manner of our Lord by pointing out the truth and allowing it to fight the battle? Are we committed to defending the truth of the gospel or are we trying to win friends and influence people? There is no call for us to become belligerent, but at the same time we should never back away from our defense of the truth.

We have a field in which to sow the seed. Jesus said the fields are white for harvest. The opportunities are abundant in a land where the gospel has free rein. Can and should we be less enthusiastic than those of the first century? The answer is, only if there is something more important in our lives than our salvation and that of others. Ask yourself, "How important is the gospel in my life?"

Parents and Learning The Faith

Mark W. White

If You Ask A Child Where People Learn, They Will Likely Say, "At School." But if you ask a 60-year old where people learn, you will get a different response. Adults know that most of life's most important lessons were not learned in a formal setting. What a child learns from his parents, outside a classroom, can shape his lifelong attitude toward learning.

Parents can teach that learning is a part of everyday

life. Do you reach for the Dictionary when you hear an unfamiliar word? When an intriguing question arises, do you Google up an encyclopedia? Now, nowhere is the principle of purposeful learning more important than in Bible study. Never let something slip by you without investigating it when it comes to Bible teaching. Berean Christians were purposeful learners (**Acts 17:11**). Read, ponder, and discuss God's word everyday with your children. Use what you learn to be a better disciple of Jesus.

Parents must teach their children how to think. The last thing we want is for our children to just accept everything they hear without evaluation. Much of what passes as either wisdom or knowledge today, even in schools, actually contradicts God's truths. Our children encounter an endless stream of false theories, misguided religious beliefs and distorted moralities (which are often "immoralities"). Train your children to critically examine what is heard in school, read online, or viewed on television. Does it make any sense? Is it considered true because it is accepted by the majority? Does it mesh at all with Scripture? We must show our kids that the only way to surely know whether or not something is true is if God has said so. If they are to resist error and stand for truth, we must train them to think logically. Faith in Christ is not simply an emotional response, it involves the intellect, the mind. Faith results when the word of God is encountered, accepted and obeyed (**Romans 10:17**). Our children are no exception to this rule. Faith is propagated no other way, except through *"learning Christ"* (**Ephesians 4:20**).

Parents can help children develop a good attitude toward learning. Babies arrive thirsty for knowledge. God made them that way. They absorb visual clues, sounds and words at an amazing rate! Some children, however, eventually develop an aversion to learning. They dislike reading. They hate listening to a teacher. What can parents do? If addiction to empty entertainment is the root of a child's poor attitude, the first step is obvious. Eliminate or severely restrict the amount of time spent on these distractions. Countless hours of television or video games take their toll. Bible classes must be stimulating learning sessions, but that usually does not involve a joystick. Listening to exhorting, informational sermons requires a degree of listening skill. Good sermons are not, however, simply entertaining. We come to enjoy good preaching in much the same way that we enjoy eating a nourishing, tasty meal.

The teaching we do at home and the learning that takes place there will favorably improve learning at the church-house. For this necessity, we are dependent on parents, not preachers.

Proper and Improper Controversy

We should all recognize that a certain bit of controversy is inevitable if there is to be growth and if the church is to be kept pure. Faithful servants of the Lord are to go out into an unbelieving world and earnestly contend for the faith. Reproving and rebuking are in order when error in practice or in doctrine appear. Christ and the apostles fought a good fight. They were worthy controversialists. They abhorred sin and opposed it, and so should we.

The church at Jerusalem was not destroyed when there was "much disputing" over the necessity of the Gentiles keeping the Jewish ordinances (**Acts 15:7**). Brethren then studied and taught calmly and avoided bitterness, so the serious question was resolved and unity that pleased the apostles and the whole church prevailed (**Acts 15:22**). Brethren, we should be able to differ without anger and malice as we study topics about which there are differences in understanding.

Avoiding foolish and unlearned questions would do much to avoid the envy and strife and the useless and improper controversy. This requires skill in discernment to separate truth from the error, and there should be special concern for the humble babe in Christ who does not understand.

It is a very significant danger signal when brethren begin to object to all study of subjects about which there is controversy. Truth can be tried in the fire of debate, but error thrives under the wet blanket of "no controversy allowed." Heresy is brought in *"privily"* (**2 Peter 2:1**). Let some vigilant elder or preacher cry aloud when some perverse doctrine or practice is slipping into the family. Let us pray that we may come to learn by studying topics which are not understood by all rather than developing factions with closed minds and bitterness. There will, of course, always be different levels of understanding between the babes in Christ and the well taught giants among us. The *"great plainness of speech"* is used to help (**2 Cor. 3:12**). Please do not object to that which is necessary to the spiritual well being of the church.

by Irvn Lee

The “new commandment” in the Gospel of John

The chapter in John’s Gospel that opens talking about Christ’s uttermost love (13.1), enjoins the following: “*A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another*” (13.34).

Love one another wasn’t something the world had never heard before. **Leviticus 19.18** said, “*you shall love your neighbor as yourself*” (see **Matt. 22.39**). Seeing that love one another was an ancient maxim, how is it a “new commandment”? I think the answer is that it was new in regard to the standard by which love would henceforth be measured: “*As I have loved you . . . have love for one another*” (cf. “*Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church,*” **Eph. 5.25**). Here are four thoughts about love set by the high bar of Christ’s love.

Action

More than a feeling, love is an action. Christ demonstrated this by getting up from the table and washing the disciples’ feet, which was but a prelude to His greatest act of love whereby He would lay down His life for us (**1 Jn. 3.16**).

Measure

Christ loved to the end (**13.1**); He didn’t draw back (**Heb. 10.39**); He didn’t stop short, shirk His duty (**Lk. 9.51**), or compromise His convictions in order to escape death, but gave His “last full measure.”

Manner

There was nothing noble or heroic in the manner of His death for it embodied all the horror, shame, and humiliation of dying by crucifixion (**Jn. 12.32–33**). Love doesn’t seek the limelight (**2 Kgs. 5.13**) but allows itself to be treated as garbage (**1 Cor. 4.13**).

Motive

A passion for a person is the essence of love. The children of light are not so much those who walk in the light as those who love the light (**Jn. 21.15–17**). Unselfish, unconditional, sacrificial, forgiving love like Christ is the new commandment love.

Kenny Chumbley

The Sting of Death

Ephraim was the largest of the twelve tribes of Israel. Joseph was the father of Ephraim and Manasseh. Sometimes, Ephraim refers to the entire northern kingdom; sometimes, Israel refers to the twelve tribes.

Israel was taken into captivity by the Assyrians in 722BC; they never reappeared. Why did this happen? Outside forces can bring ruin to a nation. Economic downturns, drought, and invading armies often bring a reversal of fortune. Now, Ephraim brought spiritual ruin and decay on themselves by continuing in idolatry. “*Through Baal, he did wrong and died.*” Death always comes when God is exchanged for idols.

Pluralism is a worldview, or philosophy, that “elevates the categories of diversity, multiplicity and difference, rather than homogeneity, unity and sameness” (*Pocket Dictionary of Ethics*, 90). Molten images, idols made of silver, and the skilled work of craftsmen, provided choices for the people of God to worship these idols; soon, the idols were enthroned in their hearts (**Ezekiel 14:4**). If the ground yielded a bumper crop, thank the gods. If rain flowed from heaven, thank the gods. Kiss the calves! Bow to the gods that controlled the world. Ephraim ignored the real nature of false religion. “*Therefore, they will be like the morning cloud and like dew which soon disappears, like chaff, which is blown away from the threshing floor, and like smoke from a chimney*” (**13:3**).

“*Shall I ransom them from the power of Sheol? Shall I redeem them from death? Death, where are your thorns? Sheol, where is your sting? Compassion will be hidden from My sight*” (**Hosea 13:14NASV**). This familiar passage is quoted by the Apostle Paul as part of a warning to the Corinthians (**1 Cor. 15:55**). Paul’s teaching about the resurrection inspires and gives hope; death is a victory for the faithful; the sting of death is sin, but the sting has been taken away by the resurrection of Christ. Is this the point Hosea is making to God’s people? Does it apply strictly to the judgment that would come on Israel? Does it look beyond captivity to a time of restoration? Did God’s people really want a relationship with their Creator. After all, they being steeped in idolatry could only bring God’s righteous judgment. When judgment came, Israel should not have been surprised.

Notice Hosea’s rhetorical questions in Hosea 13:14. “*Shall I ransom them from the power of Sheol? (no) Shall I redeem them from death? (no) Death, where are your thorns?* (your thorns cannot diminish the reward of the faithful) *Sheol, where is your sting?* (death cannot hold the children of God) *Compassion will be hidden from My sight.*” The sting of death has been taken away. Absorbing the sting of death, Jesus died and arose from the grave. Now: Do you really want to put your faith in an idol?

Randy Harshbarger

Psalm 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.

HOURS OF WORSHIP

Sunday A.M. ~ 9:00 Bible Study

Sunday A.M. ~ 10:00 Assembled Worship

Sunday A.M. ~ 10:50 Assembled Worship

Wednesday P.M. 7:00 ~ Bible Study & Worship

Visitors welcome

We conduct in home Bible Studies

We offer Correspondence Courses

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"Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus that are at Philippi,

with the bishops and deacons:"

Philippians 1:1

NEWS AND NOTES:

PLEASE REMEMBER:

ALMA BAUMGARTNER, BROOKLYN
BOYER, DAVID AND JOANNE
BECKLEY, WAYNE MOODY, ELLIE
GOLDSTON, WINNIE RAWSON,
GENE MCCLUNG, TRACY
RICHARDSON, STEVE WIMP. PAT
MCCLOUD, KEN KLING, ELI BOYD.

SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE CLASS
RON PECK - 1 CORINTHIANS

WEDNESDAY BIBLE CLASS
JIM STAUFFER - ISAIAH

SERMON: OUR SALVATION IS
FROM CHRIST



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