

Treasures Should Not Be Trite

by *Bill Crews*

Even in the material realm, treasures should not be trite. More so in the spiritual realm. Spiritual treasures should never be viewed or treated as trite. But I fear that that is exactly what has been allowed to happen among Christians, especially among second or third generation Christians.

Many of us who are Christians had parents, and perhaps even grandparents, who were Christians before us. Religious-wise we have known nothing except the gospel of Christ and the Lord's church. If we are not careful, these can become ordinary and commonplace with us. The simple, yet profound and far-reaching, "plan of salvation" or "steps into Christ" can become trite or shallow. This must never be! "Hear, believe, repent, confess, be baptized"-- "easy does it," "not much to it"-- God forbid! Too many are baptized, but not really converted. Too many are too young to really understand what they are doing. Too many take too lightly these important "steps" -- and their conduct afterwards clearly shows it. They were exposed to the wonderful gospel of Christ, but it didn't really take!

No one can be saved without hearing (or reading, or learning) the gospel of Christ. It is called a "treasure" by Paul in 2 Corinthians 4:7. He also refers to it as "the unsearchable riches of Christ" in Ephesians 3:8. It is that which Jesus commanded the apostles to preach to every creature in all the world (Mk. 16:15); the power of God unto salvation to those who will believe it (Rom. 1:16); the word which is able to save our souls and which we are to receive with meekness (Jas. 1:21); the good news about the death of Christ for our sins, His burial in a grave, His resurrection from the dead, and His appearance to chosen witnesses to attest that He does indeed live again (1 Cor. 15:3-8); that which is necessary to produce in man the faith which is required by God (Jn. 17:20; Acts 15:7; Rom. 10:14); that which is designed by God to convict the lost of their sins, to tell them what God has done for them, to announce to them what God offers them, to provide them what they must believe, and to inform them what they must do to receive the blessings offered. Yes, the lost must hear the gospel of Christ. And after one becomes a Christian, he will strive to learn more and more about the gospel and to share it with others. This should be his goal for the rest of his life.

No one can be saved without believing. This believing is the natural result of hearing the gospel of Christ with a good and honest heart (Lk. 8:15). One must believe that God is, and that God will reward those who seek Him (Heb. 11:6). One must believe the gospel to be true (Mk. 16:15-16; Acts 15:7). One must believe in Christ or believe with all the heart that He is the Christ, the Son of God (Jn. 8:24; 20:30-31; Acts 8:37; 16:30-32; 17:10-12). After one becomes a Christian, his faith will continue to grow stronger and deeper (2 Thess. 1:3; 2 Cor. 10:15). If faith comes by hearing the word of Christ, and it does (Rom. 10:17), the more he learns about the word of Christ, the stronger his faith should become. After one becomes a Christian, his life should be a life of walking by faith (2 Cor. 5:7), he will never be ashamed of his faith (Mk. 8:38; Rom. 1:16), he will strive to produce that faith in others.

No one can become a Christian without repenting of his sins. To preach the gospel is to preach faith (Rom. 10:8); to preach the gospel is to preach repentance (Lk. 24:46-47; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 17:30). Repentance is a change of mind about sin, produced by godly sorrow when one is convicted of his sins (Acts 2:37-38; 2 Cor. 7:8-10); a resolve of the will to turn away from a life of sin and to . . .

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