

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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A Man's Enemies

I do not want any enemies. I will not deliberately and with malice aforethought make any. It is the craving of my heart to "follow after peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord" (Hebrews 12:14). Nevertheless, a man's enemies can be a standing monument to his power and integrity. It was so with Christ and it was so with Paul. Theodore Roosevelt said that a man who has no enemies is the man who does nothing.

Christ said: "A man's foes shall be they of his own household" (Matthew 10:36).

The Kind I Want

If I must have a few enemies, or many, here are the kind I want: I want to make them "for the truth of the gospel." I want them to be among men who have winced from the sharp point of the sword of the Spirit. There are in active eruption, both in and out of the church, bold advocates of false doctrines. Some of them are unscrupulous. Chattering enthusiasts threaten to eclipse the present glory of the church and the power of the gospel with theories. The gospel must fit the mold of their theories or they will have none of it. If I must make a few enemies, I want them to be false teachers, church destroyers, and their sympathizers and apologists. And if they must be my enemies, I want them to be so because I have told them the truth; and on the principles involved I will ask them no quarter, nor will I offer them any. Christ did not – nor did Paul - neither shall I.

- Cled Wallace, *Gospel Advocate*, April 18, 1935

"Right Ways"

Many are the occasions recorded in God's word when the counterfeit and the genuine clash. The true and the false cannot find harmony unless one accepts the other—the true must become false, or the false must become true. This has been true ever since the devil in Eden took the genuine words of Jehovah and made them counterfeit by inserting

the three-letter word "not". One of the most striking instances of this clash between the true and the false is found in Acts thirteen.

Probably Paul was never more intensely earnest than when he met a false prophet named Bar-(son of) Jesus at Paphos when he, Barnabas, and Mark were on their first journey for the preaching of the gospel. They were in the capitol of the island of Cyprus and the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, had sent for them to come and tell him of God's word. Luke calls Sergius a prudent man. This is evidenced in his acceptance of the truth when he heard it, and in his rejecting the man who had deceived him into thinking he was a prophet of God.

The sorcerer was fortunate to be in the employ of the high official; he was not going to surrender his position without a struggle. No doubt he used all the persuasive wiles at his command to induce his employer to ignore these "wandering Jews." But Paul was not one to accept defeat easily. He set his eyes on the deceiver and spoke one of the most denunciatory passages in all the Bible — if not in all literature itself. He told this man that he was the son of the devil. His actual words were, "O full of all guile and villainy, thou son of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?"

"Right ways" of the Lord! It is just a little adjective with which Paul describes the ways of the Lord, but it is so stable and sure and definite. The ways of the Lord were right then; they are right now. Isaiah says that those "ways" are not man's ways; but, even so, Paul says they are right. There are those who tell us today that there are no such things as right and wrong, good and evil; that these are only relative terms. But Paul did not know this theory; or, if he did know it, he did not believe it. He knew some things are right and some are wrong. He knew that both truth and error, the genuine and the counterfeit, existed. Through much sacrifice, sufferings both mental and physical, and through many heartaches he had learned that the only right ways are those of the Lord. Because Paul knew this as a fact, he was able to have a glorious assurance through every kind of peril and every kind of suffering. When terrible choices confronted him, he hesitated not for one moment to choose the "right ways" of the Lord; for he knew that in the final analysis these ways were the only ones that would bring happiness and blessings.

Good and evil will clash as long as time lasts. There will be right and wrong as long as man has the power to choose. And the Lord's ways will always be the right ways. It would be pleasant, perhaps, to drift through life on flowery beds of ease, to meet no resistance and no opposition; but such a life would never develop either character or strength. There must always be choices; man must always have the possibility of making up his mind to serve the Lord rather than Satan.

When we are confronted with a great decision to be made, when good beckons with a stern and unyielding demand, and evil lures on with a tantalizing appeal, remember that the Lord's ways are right — and all other ways are necessarily wrong.

- A. T. R., via *The Gospel Guardian*, August 11, 1949

Bible Answers

QUESTION: What is the gospel? What is meant by obeying it?

ANSWER: Gospel means "good tidings." The message of the salvation which is in Christ as contained in the new covenant, upon the basis of His death, burial, and resurrection, is good. Paul preached these basic facts as constituting the gospel.

"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you unless you have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:1-4).

And all that is predicated upon the fact through death He destroyed "him that had the power of death, that is the devil," and made possible redemption, constitutes the gospel. (Hebrews 2:14-16, Colossians 1:14, Hebrews 10:9-10, etc.) The good message includes: salvation (Ephesians 1:13), peace (Ephesians 6:15), the kingdom (Matthew 4:23, Colossians 1:13), grace (Acts 20:24), etc.

What is meant by obeying it? To obey the gospel is to do all that God requires to receive the blessings that are in Christ. In the "good tidings" is revealed the righteousness of God, i.e., the sum total of God's requirements whereby man may be right before Him. The gospel, then, is His power unto man's salvation (Romans 1:16-17). To obey the gospel is to do what God requires of us as it is revealed in the gospel.

The gospel is designed to instill faith (Romans 10:17). Faith is the motivating spirit that prompts obedience (Hebrews 11). And so Jesus instructed His disciples to preach it: "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16:15-16). Baptism is an act of obedience that acknowledges the very basis of the gospel. Paul says that the gospel he preached was first of all the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). In being baptized, the Romans "obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered" even as described in preceding

verses: "we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." (Romans 6:17-18, 3-7). One has not obeyed the gospel until through faith (arising from the fact that he does believe) he is baptized. Of course, there are other requirements as well, e.g., repentance (Acts 17:30, 2 Peter 3:9, Luke 13:3) and confession of one's faith (Romans 10:10, Matthew 10:32-33). It is when the penitent believer repents, confesses his faith and is baptized, that he receives the blessings of the gospel (Acts 2:38, 41, 47, 1 Corinthians 12:13, Acts 22:16, Galatians 3:26-27, 1 Peter 3:21, Romans 10:13-14, etc.). The soul is purified in obeying the truth (1 Peter 1:22-23). Every example of obedience in the book of Acts demonstrates this truth. (On Pentecost: Acts 2:37-41; Samaritans: 8:13; Simon: 8:13; Ethiopian: 8:36-38; Cornelius: 11:14; 10:48; Lydia: 16:14-15; Philippian jailer: 16:30-33; Corinthians: 18:8; Ephesians: 19:5; Saul: 22:16.)

As a Christian, one raised to walk in newness of life, his life must conform to all that is required in worship, in morality, in service, et.al, as set forth in the gospel (Philippians 1:27).

To fail to obey the gospel is to be without Christ, and therefore a subject of divine wrath (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9, 2 John 9). It is imperative that everyone obey the gospel of Christ.

- Gene Frost, via The Gospel Guardian, October 8, 1964

Love is From God!

Love of God and love of man are indivisible in their connection, distinctively associated (1 John 4:7, 11, 20, 21). In this regard, John is concerned with not the emotional feeling of love, but the divine attribute of love that shows itself in action. It is clearly exhibited to mankind by His willingness to receive believers into His divine family and make them one with Himself (cf. 1 John 3:1).

Please note what John wrote: "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God." (1 John 4:7). "Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another." (1 John 4:11).

"If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also." (1 John 4:20-21).

Picture if you will the form of a triangle. Imagine that the three points are God, myself, and my brother (in this connection, any other believer in God's family). God loves us! The

proof that we love God is manifest by our love (reflected in action) for all who are in His family (without exception). The "myself" on the triangle actively loves those on the other two points, God and my brother. Our communion with God binds us to all other believers in His family. Believers live to reproduce God's love in humanity. If it is accurate, real and true that we love God, then we love others that God also loves. Does the love of God abide in our hearts? If so, love of others will also there abide.

- Gary Smalley

* "Mountain tops inspire leaders, but valleys mature them!"

* "One man alters his opinions to fit the truth. Another alters the truth to fit his opinions!"

* "The open hand holds more friends than the closed fist!"

* "Most people want to serve God, but only in an advisory capacity!"

* "Morning praise will make your days!"

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

HEAR THE GOSPEL

(Romans 10:14-17; John 20:30-31; Romans 1:15-17)

BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST

(Acts 8:37; John 8:24; Hebrews 11:6)

REPENT OF PAST SINS

(Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; Acts 17:30)

CONFESS CHRIST

(Romans 10:9-10; Acts 8:37)

BE BAPTIZED

(Romans 6:3-4; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; Acts 8:36-39; 1 Peter 3:21)

LIVE A FAITHFUL LIFE

(Revelation 2:10; 2 Peter 1:5-11; John 15:1-8; Hebrews 10:23-25)