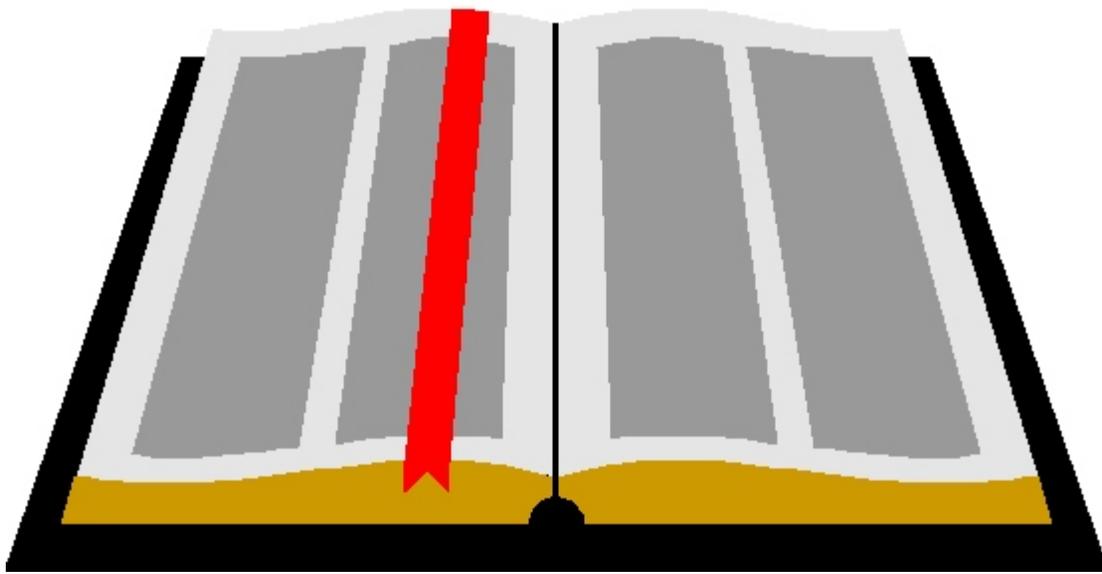

Sermons of Truth and Reason



Volume II: Sermon Outlines

Outlines That You Can Preach

Gene Taylor

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Imitate What Is Good

Text: 3 John 11

Introduction

1. John's admonition for Gaius to imitate what is good not what is evil is applicable for us today.
2. In this short epistle we have examples of both the good and the evil.

I. Imitate What Is Good: Gaius (vv. 1-8)

A. John prayed that Gaius might prosper and be in health even as his soul was—that his physical welfare would be commensurate with his spiritual welfare.

1. Unless our spiritual prosperity is at least equal to our temporal prosperity, material prosperity ceases to be a blessing.
 - a. There is no profit if one gains the whole world but loses his soul. (Mark 8:36)
 - b. The parable of the rich fool. (Luke 12:16-21)
 - c. Riches will ruin a person if his soul is not right.
 - 1) Consider 1 Timothy 6:9-10.
 - 2) On the other hand, if the prosperity of one's soul is equal with his health and wealth then he can do much good.
2. How different the world would be if this prayer of John were realized in all people.
 - a. Many of the wealthy would become poverty stricken.
 - b. Many of the poor would become wealthy.
 - c. Many now in good health would die in their weakened condition.
 - d. Many diseased, crippled and unhealthy people would become a picture of health.
3. What if this prayer were realized in us?
 - a. Would we die of starvation because we so seldom feed our souls? (1 Pet. 2:2; 2 Tim. 2:15; Heb. 10:25)
 - b. Would we become physically weak even as we are spiritually weak because of a lack of spiritual exercise? (Heb. 5:13-14)
 - c. Others might suppose us to be physically dead inasmuch as we sometimes seem to be spiritually lifeless. (1 Cor. 11:30; Eph. 5:14)

B. Characteristics of Gaius which we should imitate.

1. He appropriated truth in his mind and heart. (v. 3)
 - a. He believed the truth. (John 17:17)
 - b. He did not believe the false teaching of his time concerning the person and work of Christ (Gnosticism).
 - 1) Some doubted the deity of Christ, His preexistence and incarnation because He suffered indignity and anguish. (cf. John 1:1, 14)
 - 2) Some doubted His manhood saying that Deity was above such suffering so they taught that His body was merely an illusion. (1 John 1:1-2)
2. The truth was manifested in his life and conduct. (v. 3)
 - a. His practical life was in harmony with his professed teaching - not hypocritical.
 - b. The truth that he believed was a living force in his conduct.
 - 1) Consider verse 11.
 - 2) Consider 1 John 3:7-10.

3. He was hospitable. (vv. 5-6; cf. Rom. 12:13; Heb. 13:2)
4. He supported the preaching and teaching of the truth. (v. 8)

II. Do Not Imitate What Is Evil: Diotrophes (vv. 9-10)

- A. He loved to have the preeminence. He wanted to be first and foremost.
 1. One is not to think more highly of himself than he ought. (Rom. 12:3)
 2. Greatness comes from serving (Matt. 23:10-12)
 3. The proper attitude the Christian is to have toward other Christians is seen in Philippians 2:1-4.
- B. He rejected the authority of John, an apostle of Christ.
 1. Reject an apostle, reject Christ. (Luke 10:16)
 2. Reject the teaching of an apostle, reject God. (1 Thes. 4:8)
- C. He was prating (Footnote NKJV: “talking nonsense”) against John with wicked words (idle, foolish and unprofitable talk directed with a malicious intent). (See Eph. 5:3-4)
- D. He would not show hospitality to the brethren nor allow the rest of the church to do their duty toward those worthy ones needing help. (v. 10)
- E. John forecast the punishment of this wicked one.

Conclusion

1. Which is seen in your life? Which do you imitate?
2. The destiny of your soul depends on your answer and actions
 - a. Are you of God?
 - b. Have you not seen God?

Measuring Spiritual Maturity

Introduction

1. When one becomes a child of God:
 - a. He is born again spiritually. (John 3:1-5)
 - b. He is thus a spiritual babe who is to grow. (1 Pet. 2:1-2; 2 Pet. 3:18)
2. One grows spiritually by:
 - a. Feeding upon the word of God. (Acts 20:32)
 - b. Developing a spiritual appetite in order to hunger and thirst after righteousness. (Matt. 5:6)
3. How can one accurately measure that growth?
 - a. What standards can be employed to gauge that growth?
 - b. The Bible, as always, supplies those standards and this lesson will consider some of them.

I. The “Christian Graces” (2 Peter 1:5-11)

- A. In order to grow as one should, these must be added to one’s faith.
 1. They must be incorporated into one’s life as a Christian.
 2. To properly add them to your life, you must know what they are and why you need them.
- B. Things to be added to one’s faith (Faith being the foundation upon which to build).
 1. Virtue: the determination to do right.
 2. Knowledge: knowledge of the word of God for it tells you what is right.
 3. Self-control: application of that knowledge to your life.
 4. Perseverance: remaining steadfast to the Lord and His cause.
 5. Godliness: being like God, as He would have you to be.
 6. Brotherly kindness: tender affection toward brethren in Christ.
 7. Love:
 - a. Devotion to God, Christ and your fellow man.
 - b. Expressed in obedience to God which causes you to be of service to all.
- C. If you are maturing as you should, these things are abounding in your life.
 1. If you lack these things you are blind as to what your life in Christ should be about.
 2. These do not come easily, it takes “diligence” on your part.

II. The Fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:16-25)

- A. “The Spirit produces fruit by so ruling in and controlling man that it subdues and holds in restraint all the evil passions and lusts that dwell in the flesh, and develops into activity and life the germs of the spiritual life in man.” (David Lipscomb, *GA Commentary on 2nd Cor. and Gal.*, p. 270)
- B. The fruit of the Spirit is:
 1. Love: God and neighbor (the underlying principle of all).
 2. Joy: Not based on externals rather “the delight of love satisfied.”
 3. Peace: With God that passes all understanding (Phil. 4:7), peace of the soul.
 4. Longsuffering: to bear with the mistakes and wrongs which grow out of weaknesses, infirmities and even the evil designs of others.
 5. Kindness: gentle toward all, return good for evil.
 6. Goodness: kindly activity for the true good of others.
 7. Faithfulness: complete trust and confidence in God.

8. Gentleness (meekness): quiet, forbearing spirit that suffers wrong without resentment; but firmness and unyielding devotion to right.
9. Self-control: restraining of all passions and desires within the limits of the divine standard.

III. Other Marks of Maturity Found in Scripture

- A. The ability to take “solid food.” (Heb. 5:14)
 1. The example of the Corinthians. (1 Cor. 3:1-3)
 2. This ability is obtained by study and application.
- B. The ability to discern good and evil. (Heb. 5:14)
- C. The ability to control one’s tongue. (Jas. 3:2)
- D. Love for one’s enemies. (Matt. 5:48)
- E. A realization of one’s own imperfections. (Phil. 3:11-15)
- F. If you have gone, sold and followed: If Christ is your all. (Matt. 19:21)

Conclusion

1. How do you measure up? Are you growing as a Christian?
2. Keep reading, studying and applying these passages and with diligent effort and a great deal of prayer, you will become complete, mature, perfect in Christ.

Peace

Text: 1 Peter 3:8-12

Introduction

1. Peace is the desire of all right-thinking people.
 - a. In times of war, no word has more meaning.
 - b. Soldiers think of days when they went about the quiet and orderly pursuits of life and enjoyed peace.
2. Peace is no less desirable in the spiritual realm. (Rom. 14:19)

I. New Testament Usages of the Word

- A. Cessation from war or strife.
 1. National tranquility. (Acts 24:2)
 2. Cessation of persecution against the church. (Acts 9:31)
- B. Harmony between individuals.
 1. "Seek peace and pursue it." (1 Pet. 3:10-11)
 2. "Pursue peace with all people." (Heb. 12:14)
 3. "Live peaceably with all men." (Rom. 12:18)
- C. Safety or security.
 1. Security. (Luke 11:21)
 2. Safety. (1 Thes. 5:3)
- D. A form of blessing or goodwill. (Luke 10:6)
- E. Reconciliation (peace) between the sinner and God.
 1. "Being therefore justified by faith, we have peace with God." (Rom. 5:1)
 2. Peter came to the house of Cornelius "preaching peace by Jesus Christ." (Acts 10:36)
- F. The state of assurance and hope of one who has obeyed the Lord's will .
 1. "To be spiritually minded is life and peace." (Rom 8:6)
 2. "Be diligent to be found by Him in peace." (2 Pet. 3:14)
- G. The blessed state of the devout in the world to come. (Rom. 2:5-10)

II. Things Which Destroy Peace in the Spiritual Realm

- A. Being soon angry: Some have explosive tempers which can be ignited with a very little spark (e.g. business meetings).
 1. "Put off anger." (Col. 3:8)
 2. An elder is not to be "quick tempered." (Titus 1:7)
 3. The proper way to respond is found in Proverbs 15:1.
- B. Selfishness: a childish characteristic.
 1. When a person is determined to have his own way, it is bound to cause trouble.
 2. In matters of judgment, all will not agree, therefore, someone must yield.
 3. An elder is not to be "self-willed." (Titus 1:7)
- C. A desire for preeminence.
 1. Some seek to be modern day Diotrophes. (3 John 9)
 2. When a person is not content to be a laborer in the vineyard, it is bound to destroy peace.
 3. Christ is to have preeminence. (Col. 1:18)
 4. Our greatness is seen in service. (Matt. 20:20-28)

D. Self-justification.

1. It is always difficult for those with this attitude to admit wrong.
2. Sometimes mistakes are made (little damage is done) but rather than confess the error and change their life and minimize damage, these begin to justify self causing great and, many times, irreparable harm.
3. When we do wrong, we need to have the spirit of the prodigal son who said, "I have sinned."

E. Ignorance.

1. This has never built up one congregation but it has helped to tear many of them apart.
2. Peace in a congregation is based on a proper understanding of the Bible.
 - a. This understanding only comes by hard study.
 - b. Where study is neglected, ignorance prevails and peace is destroyed.

III. Things Which Promote Peace in the Spiritual Realm

A. A genuine love for the Lord and His church.

1. We need the same love towards the church that Jesus had. (Eph. 5:25)
2. When problems and/or differences arise and we seek for a solution, we must:
 - a. Put self in the background.
 - b. Keep the welfare of the Lord's church in mind.
3. Since the church is the "pillar and ground of truth" (1 Tim. 3:15), we ought not to retard its work by thinking of ourselves first and foremost .

B. A sincere interest in the souls of others.

1. When discord prevails, we are not only hindered in the work of leading lost souls to Christ but we cause others to become discouraged and quit.
2. Our responsibility is to each other. (Phil. 2:3,4)

C. Retaliation is forbidden.

1. Often when we are slighted or mistreated, we are ready to get revenge.
2. We must leave that up to the Lord. (Rom. 12:19-21)

D. An understanding of the other person.

1. In order to understand the captives, Ezekiel "sat where they sat" for seven days (Ezek. 3:15).
2. All of us are different: personalities, background, likes and dislikes, daily circumstances vary, etc.
 - a. One may be in poor health, worried over family troubles of which others do not know.
 - b. Some are babes in Christ who need patience and understanding.
3. We should give to others the same patience and understanding that we desire for ourselves.
4. The "golden rule" must be applied by Christians in their treatment of each other.
5. Always remember, as I have to put up with him, he has to put up with me.

Conclusion

1. It is a sad day when brethren part over matters of faith but how sad it must be in the sight of God when brethren will divide over no more than a petty grievance or a personality clash.
2. It is always the cause of Christ which suffers when brethren do not strive for peace.
3. Let us together pursue for peace so that Christ and His church might be glorified and that we might be saved eternally.

Teaching and Learning Proper Respect

Text: Ephesians 6:1-4

Introduction

1. We live in an age and society in which the views of children and views toward children are drastically different from what they were in Biblical times.
 - a. Today children have become the authoritative figure in many homes and parents, under the delusion of “love” and “understanding,” tolerate disrespect and selfishness and bow to the whims of their children.
 - b. In Biblical times things were different.
 - 1) Disrespect by children was not to be tolerated.
 - 2) The law of Moses made provision for unruly children. (Lev. 20:9; Deut. 21:18-21)
2. Even though society’s views have changed, the Bible still remains relevant in this area.
 - a. It is still the best manual for rearing children. (“God never created anything without giving instructions for it.”)
 - b. If its principles are applied, the results will be the same today as they were when the Bible was first written.
3. How sad it is that many children have no concept of respect in any form.

I. Children Must Be Taught Respect

- A. Children must be taught to respect parents. (Eph. 6:1-4)
 1. The view God takes of disrespect for parents is not something to be taken lightly.
 - a. Consider His commands concerning disobedient children in the law of Moses. (Lev. 20:9; Deut. 21:18-21)
 - b. Anything God takes so seriously, we also ought to take seriously.
 2. Children need to be taught to honor their parents because honor expresses the frame of mind from which obedience proceeds.
 3. To honor father and mother is the first commandment with promise
 - a. It is the first of the ten commandments to have a specific promise attached to it. (Ex. 20:12)
 - b. It is the first thing practiced thus the first step in developing into a proper person.
 4. Four reasons to respect (honor) parents:
 - a. God wants you to.
 - 1) He commands it. (Eph. 6:1)
 - 2) He cites the example of Jesus. (Luke 2:51)
 - b. It is right. (Eph. 6:1)
 - 1) Because it is in the word of God.
 - 2) It is proper in return for the care and provisions you receive.
 - c. It may be “well with you” (Eph. 6:3), not only with your parents but also with God.
 - d. “You may live long on the earth.” (Eph. 6:3)
 - 1) Generally speaking, those children who follow the principles imparted to them by right-thinking parents are going to live longer lives.
 - 2) Certainly, a child under the law of Moses who respected his parents would live longer than the rebellious child who was stoned to death.

- B. Children need to learn to respect older people. (Lev. 19:32)
- C. Children need to learn to respect government, i.e., authority figures in society. (Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Pet. 2:17)
 - 1. The authority figure in school: principal, teacher, dean, etc.
 - 2. The laws of the government must be respected.
- D. Children need to learn to respect God.
 - 1. Consider Psalms 89:7 and Hebrews 12:28.
 - 2. The example of Jesus can be cited again. (John 6:38; Matt. 26:39; Heb. 5:12)

II. Some Consequences

- A. Of a disrespectful attitude.
 - 1. It causes parents to sorrow and grieve. (Prov. 10:1; 17:21, 25) [Remember “golden rule.”]
 - 2. You show you “despise” your parents. (Prov. 15:20)
 - a. Despise.
 - 1) “To reject, refuse, despise.” (*Nelson’s Expository Dictionary of the OT*)
 - 2) “To do that which implies contempt; to slight, neglect, make little of, to treat contemptuously and proudly.” (*Wilson’s OT Word Studies*)
 - b. Rejection is a terrible state to force upon one’s parents.
 - 3. You become “foolish.” (Prov. 15:20; 17:21, 25)
 - a. The term “wise guy” which is often applied to those who are disrespectful, is really a misnomer.
 - b. One is not wise when disrespectful of parents, authorities, etc., because all of them are given to you by God for your benefit.
 - 4. God’s wrath is upon you.
 - a. In the New Testament, those “disobedient to parents” are “deserving of death.” (Rom. 1:30, 32)
 - b. Proverbs 30:17 contains obvious signs of judgment upon a disrespectful child.
- B. Of a respectful attitude.
 - 1. It causes parents to have joy. (Prov. 10:1; 15:20; 23:24-25)
 - 2. You show yourself to be wise. (Prov. 1:8-9)
 - a. Ornaments and chains: Things of beauty and value which are admired by others.
 - b. A beautiful life is most admired. (cf. 1 Pet. 3:3-6)
 - 3. God rejoices in you. (Prov. 23:15-16)

Conclusion

- 1. To be respected, you must respect others.
- 2. The sooner you learn and manifest proper respect, the better and happier your life will be.

Going the Second Mile

Text: Matthew 5:38-48

Introduction

1. In New Testament times, Roman couriers were authorized to press into service any available person or beast for transportation of official documents but they could not compel a citizen to go further than one mile.
2. Citing this practice, Jesus is saying, “Don’t go a mile with bitter and obvious resentment. Go two miles with cheerfulness and good grace.”
3. This text is a lesson on attitude—we should live with the attitude of the second mile.

I. A Comparison of the First Mile to the Second

A. The first mile.

1. It is a mile of compulsion. (v. 41)
 - a. Compel (*aggareuein*): “to impress into service.” (W.E. Vine)
 - b. Simon of Cyrene was compelled to carry Jesus’ cross. (Matt. 27:32)
2. Those who claim to be Christians but who have the attitude of the first mile often ask:
 - a. “Why should I do more?”
 - b. “How many services do I have to attend to be faithful?”
 - c. “How much do I have to give?”
 - d. “How much work do I have to do?”
 - e. “Do I have to attend gospel meetings?”
3. Those who raise such questions betray a false concept of service to God.
 - a. They are trying to see how little they can get by with and still be faithful.
 - b. In reality, it is a matter of dedication and commitment.

B. The second mile.

1. It is more difficult for it is a mile of grace.
 - a. It is a display of goodness and kindness.
 - b. It is accomplished by love for the Lord. (John 14:23; 1 John 4:18)
2. Those who travel the second mile have an attitude of “What more can I do?”
 - a. This attitude is illustrated by 1 Corinthians 15:58. “Abound” literally means to overflow, excel, or exceed.
 - b. This attitude is Luke 6:38 in reverse.

II. Other Applications of This Attitude

A. When smitten, turn the other cheek. (vv. 38-39)

1. This is a personal challenge to a duel, both an injury and an insult. (John 19:13; 2 Cor. 11:20)
2. Turn the other cheek—do not have an “eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth” mentality.
 - a. Do not sink to their level.
 - b. Rise above a personal affront.

B. When sued for your tunic, let them have your cloak. (v. 40)

1. The cloak could not be taken from a man by law. (Ex. 22:26-27)
2. The Christian never stands upon his rights because he considers others before he ever considers himself.

- C. Give to the one who asks — do not turn away from one who wants to borrow. (v. 42)
 - 1. This is the attitude one should have toward the needs of others.
 - 2. Jesus is evidently speaking of those who are truly needy. (1 Tim. 5:8; 2 Thes. 3:10)
 - a. One is not to encourage sin or slothfulness.
 - b. One's attitude must be proper toward those who are truly in need.
 - 3. The Christian is not to be selfish or revengeful but liberal and generous.
- D. Loving your enemy. (vv. 43-48)
 - 1. This refers to those who hate you.
 - 2. *Agapeo*: "To love, to be full of goodwill and exhibit the same, interest in others welfare."
 - 3. Anyone can love the loving but it takes a "second mile" attitude to love the unlovable.

Conclusion

- 1. "So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, 'We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.'" (Luke 17:10)
- 2. We must go the second mile.
 - a. It is difficult.
 - b. It is one abundant with reward.

Laziness

Introduction

1. Christians are to be energetic.
 - a. They are to use their time wisely. (Col. 4:5; Eph. 5:15-16)
 - b. They are to be the finest, most productive employees. (Eph. 4:28; 6:5-8; Col. 3:22,24; Titus 2:9,10)
 - c. No Christian is ever to be lazy. (2 Thess. 3:6-8,10-13)
 - d. No Christian is to be a sluggard, lazy man, guilty of slothfulness.
2. The Hebrew word translated “sluggard” or “lazy man” is “*acel*.”
 - a. It is only found in the book of Proverbs.
 - b. The root meaning is “to be sluggish, stupid.”
 - c. By definition, the lazy man is one who lacks sense.
 - 1) He does not make proper decisions.
 - 2) He cannot make up his mind to do what is most needful and important.

I. Who Is Guilty of Laziness?

- A. Those who want to do nothing. (Prov. 13:4; 19:24)
- B. Those who engage in activities of secondary importance and neglect those activities which should challenge their talents. (Prov. 20:4)
 1. Someone has said, “Not only is he idle who is doing nothing, but he might be better employed.”
 2. The “one-talent man” had been active (Matt. 25:14-30)
 - a. He buried and unburied the money but was still called “lazy.”
 - b. He had not been busy in the most significant activity.
 3. The Pharisees in Jesus’ day were guilty of this. (Matt. 23:23)
 4. People who claim to be Christians often fill their lives with the more mundane aspects of service while leaving undone those things which are most important such as reaching the lost, teaching their children, etc.
- C. Those who are waiting for the church or elders to tell them what to do. (Prov. 6:6-11)

II. The Causes of Laziness

- A. Tomorrow seems to offer better opportunities than there are today. (Prov. 27:1)
- B. Many have never known the need for hard work and effort—“Let others do it.” (Prov. 26:14-16)
- C. Some quit because they are easily discouraged.
 1. “To avoid criticism, do nothing!”
 2. They see that they are inconvenienced, that it’s not as glamorous as they thought it would be, etc.
 3. They do not see immediate results.
- D. Some rarely see anything through to completion, only the “new” intrigues them.

III. The Curse of Laziness

- A. It paves the way for additional sins.
 1. “An idle mind is the devil’s workshop.”
 2. Consider 1 Timothy 5:13.

- B. It makes room for discontent and complaints: notice how the “one-talent” man, the lazy servant, maligned his master. (Matt. 25:24)
- C. It leads to mental and spiritual collapse. (Eccl. 10:18)
- D. It begets beggary. (Prov. 6:10,11; 19:15; 23:21)
- E. It causes one to be repugnant to God. (Prov. 10:26)

Conclusion: What the Lazy Man Must Do

1. He must realize his condition and awake from it. (Eph. 5:14)
2. He must awake to righteousness and full, energetic service to the Lord for opportunities abound. (Jas. 1:22-25)

Worldliness

Text: 1 John 2:15-17

Introduction

1. A ever-present problem for Christians in any age is that of worldliness.
 - a. It is difficult to live in the world but not be of the world. (John 17:11-16)
 - b. The Christian is to put away the world since he is a new creation in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17) and all things are to become new.
 - c. The Christian is to be unspotted from the world. (Jas. 1:27)
 - d. The Christian is to be separate from the worldly. (2 Cor. 6:17-18)
2. The church at Corinth was plagued with many problems because of its worldliness.
 - a. They had not transformed their thinking—it was still carnal. (1 Cor. 3:1-3)
 - b. It led them to allow an adulterer in their fellowship and, if left unchecked, would lead to their ultimate demise. (1 Cor. 5:6-7)
3. Any church that has problems has worldliness.
 - a. Worldliness is not just seen in what we normally think of as worldly actions.
 - b. Worldly attitudes are even more prevalent (Note the “works of the flesh” in Gal. 5:19-21).

I. Worldliness

- A. As it is set forth in the NT, it is any conduct or thought which is hostile to and/or antagonistic toward God. (Text)
- B. When one of God’s children engages in or longs for anything in this world which is hostile toward God, he/she is guilty of worldliness.
 1. Every individual has to make a choice such as Moses did. (Heb. 11:24-26)
 2. One who longingly looks to the world is unfit for the kingdom of God. (Luke 9:62)
- C. The Christian is to be able to discern good and evil—to know the difference between right and wrong, worldly and godly. (Heb. 5:12-14)
 1. He is to hate evil. (Rom. 12:9)
 2. Even though he is surrounded by the world, he must be careful not to be influenced by it so that evil becomes good and good becomes evil.

II. Some Guidelines to Determine Worldliness

- A. Revelation: Is this obviously wrong?
 1. Human wisdom is not a reliable guide.
 2. Consider passages that detail those things that are obviously wrong: 1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Galatians 5:19-21; Colossians 3:5-9.
- B. Identity: If I do this will it make me look worldly? (Rom. 12:1-2)
 1. If I do this will I appear before others as a devoted Christian or a person of the world?
 2. If it will make me look worldly, then I cannot afford to do it.
- C. Doubt: If I do this, will it leave me with a clear conscience? (Rom. 14:23)
 1. Do I have some doubts about it?
 2. If I cannot do it with a clear conscience, I better leave it alone.

- D. Influence: If I do this will it likely have a weakening influence upon others?
 - 1. See 1 Corinthians 10:23-33; 8:7-13; Matthew 18:6-7.
 - 2. If my conduct is likely to weaken others or cause them to stray, I better not engage in it.
- E. Control: If I do this will it produce in me an inordinate fleshly appetite? (Col. 3:5-6)
 - 1. Such an appetite is one that is unrestrained or out of control.
 - 2. If I partake of this, am I likely to lose proper control of my thoughts and actions? Will I act in a way that is unbecoming to a Christian?
- F. Association: If I do this will it bring me under the weakening influence of evil companions? (2 Cor. 6:14-18)
 - 1. Evil companions corrupt. (1 Cor. 15:33)
 - 2. You not only are known by the company you keep, you become like the company you keep.

Conclusion

- 1. For the church to be what it ought to be, you and I must be what we ought to be.
- 2. Worldliness will be the demise of those who stay in the world but I am afraid it will also cause many of those who were once in Christ to be lost eternally.
- 3. See 2 Corinthians 6:17-18.

Five Essentials for Doing the Work of the Lord

Introduction

1. What would you cite as the greatest problem in congregations today?
 - a. Moral problems? Institutional issues? Marriage, divorce, remarriage problems?
 - b. The list could probably be endless.
2. One of the greatest problems is a lack of work.
 - a. Christians are created in Christ for them. (Eph. 2:10)
 - b. Disciples are to be zealous for them. (Titus 2:14)
3. Many times the Lord's work is not accomplished because the saints do not possess the proper attitudes to accomplish it.
 - a. What are those attitudes?
 - b. This lesson will seek to list and explain some of them.

I. A Powerful Faith

- A. If one believes nothing, he will do nothing.
 1. If we do not think we can do something, we are not going to try it.
 2. The example of the spies sent by Moses to spy out Canaan. (Num. 13:17ff; 14:11-12)
- B. With faith "all things are possible." (Matt. 17:14-21)
- C. No works = no faith. (Jas. 2:14ff) Conversely, no faith = no works.

II. A Joyful Heart (Phil. 4:4)

- A. We should not be despondent and down-hearted.
- B. We have so many good things for which to be thankful.
 1. We are the children of God. (1 John 3:1-3)
 2. We have all spiritual blessings. (Eph. 1:3)
 3. We will receive the crown of life. (2 Tim. 4:7-8)

III. A Continual Reliance on Prayer

- A. The prayer of the righteous avails much. (Jas. 5:16ff; Matt. 21:18-22)
- B. People who are interested enough to pray are not interested enough to work.
- C. We know that:
 1. God answers prayer. (Matt. 7:7-11)
 2. Prayer changes things.
 - a. We should pray to the one who can change them.
 - b. We should pray about things that can be changed.
 - c. If God does not see fit to change things, we should pray that our desires may change to conform to His.
 - d. We must never give up our desire to make things change for the better by our prayers.

IV. A Personal Love

- A. We must have a love for the Lord. (John 14:23-24; cf. 1 John 5:3; 2:4)

- B. We must possess a love for the brethren. (Heb. 13:1; 1 John 4:20-21; Heb. 10:24-25)
 - 1. To function collectively there must be love and unity. (1 Cor. 1:10; Phil. 2:1-4)
 - 2. Some would rather “bite and devour” others. (Gal. 5:15)
- C. We must show a love for the lost.
 - 1. Consider Luke 19:10.
 - 2. Heaven’s attitude is seen in Luke 15:1-7.
- D. If you do not have love you will not care but then it really does not matter. (1 Cor. 13:1-3)

V. A Persistent Effort

- A. Persistency of effort is the secret of success. (Luke 18:1-8)
- B. Application:
 - 1. Noah took 120 years to build the ark.
 - 2. The example of the apostle Paul. (Phil. 3:12-15)
- C. We are to be living a life of service. (Rom. 12:1-2; 1 Cor. 15:58)
- D. We must not be discouraged by lack of results.
 - 1. The Lord judges, not on results, but on effort.
 - 2. We will not be condemned for a lack of results but will be for a lack of effort.

Conclusion

- 1. Every disciple needs to possess each of these attitudes.
- 2. If the work of the Lord is going to be accomplished, it will be by those who are loving, joyful, faithful, prayerful and persistent.
- 3. Do you have what it takes to work for the Lord?

Some Indispensable People

Text: Philippians 4:1-7

Introduction

1. Parents naturally love their children.
 - a. Some disappoint them and cause them anxiety and sorrow.
 - b. Others delight them and bring them joy.
2. In establishing many local churches, the apostle Paul had many “children” in the faith. (Phil. 2:22)
 - a. Some disappointed him.
 - 1) Corinthians. (1 Cor. 3:1-3)
 - 2) Galatians. (Gal. 1:6)
 - b. Others delighted him, the Philippians being his “joy and crown.” (Text)
3. Those who comprise the church today are much the same.
 - a. In some, we and the Lord are disappointed.
 - b. Others are a “joy and crown” to the church in which they worship and serve.
4. The church cannot do without them for they are the faithful.

I. Faithfulness Is Required

- A. The Lord does not require greatness as man thinks of it.
- B. He does require faithfulness. (Rev. 2:10-11)
 1. The parables of Matthew 25 demonstrate this principle. (vv. 1-30)
 2. Christians are to be faithful stewards. (1 Cor. 4:1-2)
 3. “God does not require that you possess a beautiful voice to sing His praises, but He does command that you possess a beautiful life. One cannot live a sinful life and offer holy worship unto God.” (Keith Sharp, “Worship of the Church, *Truth Magazine*, Vol. XXIV, No. 1, Jan. 3, 1980)

II. Some Characteristics of the Faithful

- A. Willing. (2 Cor. 8:3,12; 1 Tim. 6:17-18)
 1. Some are willing, others do what they are asked, some are unwilling to do anything.
 2. Usually, the ones who complain the loudest and whine the most about others are the “do-nothings.”
 - a. Such are depressing people.
 - b. They are also destructive people: to themselves, others and to the work in general.
- B. Able to see .
 1. They have vision. (John 4:35)
 2. They see not only the needs but also the possibilities.
- C. Optimistic. (1 Sam. 17:45-47)
 1. They believe things can be done. (Phil. 4:13)
 2. They rejoice in the Lord. (Phil. 4:4)

D. Boosters. They encourage. (Acts 4:36; 11:20-24)

1. In the face of discouragements, limited abilities and resources they continue to be supportive of the work and devoted to the Lord.
2. They are not like boosters of a team that can only be enthusiastic when it is winning—they endure the bad times as well as enjoy the good.

E. Liberal. (2 Cor. 8:2)

1. In the positive sense of being willing to share.
2. They are liberal with money, time, abilities, etc.
3. Stingy people never prosper.

Conclusion

1. Are you one of those people the church cannot get along without?
2. Are you a source of anxiety and sorrow, or are you a “joy and crown?”

Making Wise Choices

Text: Joshua 24:13-15

Introduction

1. The challenge of Joshua to Israel is still of vital importance, especially to the young.
 - a. The young have been granted much for which they have not worked—from parents and the Lord.
 - b. The choice he placed before Israel was a choice all must make.
2. Every day you make choices: some major, most minor.
 - a. Even the minor ones are important.
 - b. How you make choices will determine your course and success in life.
3. Some helpful guidelines.
 - a. Do not make impulsive, rash decisions.
 - b. Make decisions. Do not be indecisive or procrastinate.
 - c. Apply good sense, reason and logic.
 - d. Make all choices with God in mind using His standard.
 - 1) Life is a constant struggle between good and evil, right and wrong, God's way and the way of the world.
 - 2) All must make a choice. (Text; Matt. 6:24; 12:30)

I. The Importance of Making Proper Choices

- A. Lot's choice caused him and his family terrible consequences. (Gen. 13:1-11)
 1. His daughters partook of the city of Sodom and were destroyed. (Gen. 19:14)
 2. He lost his wife. (Gen. 19:25-26)
 3. His two surviving daughters, influenced by Sodom, got him drunk and sinned with him. (Gen. 19:30-38)
- B. Right choices bring great blessings.
 1. Moses. (Heb. 11:24-26)
 - a. His choice may have seemed foolish to his peers.
 - b. Because of his choice:
 - 1) He is considered one of God's greats. (Heb. 11:24)
 - 2) He appeared at the mount of Transfiguration. (Matt. 17:1-5)
 - 3) They sing in heaven of him. (Rev. 15:1-3)
 2. Jesus.
 - a. He made a choice that brought blessings to all.
 - b. He chose to come to earth and live as a man (Phil 2:5-11) and to lay down His life. (John 10:17-18)

II. Some Major Choices to Be Made in Life

- A. Who your friends will be.
 1. Use 1 Corinthians 15:33 to help make choices in this area.
 2. Realize the power of peer group pressure. (Consider Ex. 23:2)
 3. Choices made about dating are extremely important.
- B. Schooling.
 1. In what area? How far you will go?

2. Thomas Jefferson: “If a nation expects to be ignorant and free, in a state of civilization, it expects what never was and never will be.”
- C. Employment—vocation.
1. The majority of people are unhappy in what they do.
 2. Your choice in this area affects every aspect of your life so take care in making it.
- D. Marriage.
1. The measure of success and happiness in life, the eternal destiny of your soul, the soul of your companion and the souls of your children may well be determined by this choice.
 2. Young people: choose to enter marriage with purity.
 - a. It is God’s will that you do. (Heb. 13:4)
 - b. Realize the dangers of disease and Aids.
 3. Take marriage seriously.
 - a. Use good judgment: know the difference between infatuation and love.
 - b. Do not rush into it.
 - c. Listen to good advice from trusted friends and your parents. Talk to those who have had successful marriages.
 - d. Follow God’s instructions.
 - e. Make a wise choice.
- E. Whom you serve. (Text)
1. You are urged to make this choice early in life. (Eccl. 12:1)
 - a. Sow wild oats? You will reap what you sow. (Gal. 6:7-8)
 - b. “Flee youthful lusts.” (2 Tim. 2:22)
 2. You must make this choice. (Matt. 6:24; 12:30; Jas. 4:4)

III. Be a Person of Commitment

- A. Proper choices without commitment are meaningless.
- B. Because of a lack of commitment:
1. Marriages fail.
 2. Many drop out of school.
 3. Many forsake the Lord.
- C. Nowhere is commitment more important than in spiritual matters.
1. Worldly allurements will entice and tempt.
 2. “Friends” will try to get you to compromise.
 3. You must commit and press on. (Luke 9:62; Phil. 3:8-16)

Conclusion

1. Make right choices. Became adept at the decision-making process.
2. First and foremost, decide to serve God and then make all choices with Him and His will in mind.
3. Why not be an example and make that choice now?

Contentment

Text: Philippians 4:11-12

Introduction

1. The apostle Paul had learned the secret of contentment.
 - a. It is a secret worth learning.
 - b. It is one that many professed Christians have failed to learn.
2. Though happiness and contentment are not the same, it might be said that contentment is a prerequisite of happiness.
 - a. It is difficult to be happy while discontent.
 - b. Paul was not dissatisfied with his own state for he had learned the gift of contentment.
3. The word in the Greek is “*autarkeia*” which means entirely self-sufficient.
 - a. “Sufficient in oneself, self-sufficient, adequate, needing no assistance; hence, content, Phil. 4:11.” (W.E. Vine)
 - b. Its general idea is independence from outside circumstances—the opposite of unrest, worry and anxiety.
4. The apostle Paul personified the definition.
 - a. He could face anything - could have nothing or all things, it made no difference—because he had Christ.
 - b. The one who walks with Christ and lives in Him can cope with anything.

I. Contentment Viewed Both Negatively and Positively

- A. Negatively: things in which one should not be content.
 1. To live in sin or disobedience. (Rom. 6:1-2)
 2. To sit and do nothing for the cause of Christ. (Titus 2:14)
 3. Self. (Phil. 3:12-14)
- B. Positively: the example of Paul.
 1. Live in prosperity and remain faithful to God.
 2. To live abased—to live without:
 - a. Money.
 - b. Youth—grow old gracefully.
 - c. Physical health. Paul’s thorn in the flesh. (2 Cor. 12:7-10)
 - d. Praise or approval of others.
 - d. Having your own way.

II. Three Evidences of Discontentment

- A. Murmuring—complaining—fretting. (1 Cor. 10:10)
- B. Anxiety. (Phil. 4:6)
- C. Fear. (Phil. 4:7; Rom. 8:31-39)

III. Three Basic Elements of the Secret of Contentment

- A. A realization that nothing of an earthly nature either lasts or satisfies. (Eccl. 1:8; 2 Cor. 4:16- 18)
- B. Confidence in the wise and loving providence of God. (Heb. 11:6; Rom. 8:28)
- C. The fact that one actually has God in his life. (2 John 9)

IV. How Paul Learned Contentment

- A. Not by accident—**will** is a major factor.
- B. Contentment is actually a by-product of:
 - 1. Discipline. (Heb. 12:11)
 - 2. Trust. (2 Tim. 1:12)
 - 3. The veracity of God's promises. (Phil. 4:6, 7, 13, 19)

Conclusion

- 1. Contentment does not come by accident.
- 2. Contentment comes by doing the will of the Lord, continually disciplining oneself by it.
- 3. Are you content? If not, learn the secret of contentment.

Practicing Discernment

Text: Hebrews 5:12-14

I. The Meaning and Purpose of Discernment

- A. Its meaning.
 - 1. “A distinguishing, a clear discrimination, discerning, judging...” (W.E. Vine)
 - 2. To see and identify by noting differences such as distinguishing good from evil, right from wrong, truth from error.
- B. It is not choosing between the pleasant and the unpleasant.
 - 1. The choice is between the good and the bad.
 - 2. What may be pleasant may be bad and what may be unpleasant may be good.
 - 3. It is not choosing that which necessarily pleases me but of choosing that which is best for me and others, the church and the gospel.
- C. “By reason of use.”
 - 1. The Greek word means by reason of practice or habit. (NKJV footnote: “practice.”)
 - 2. Continued application of the standard of God in the life of the Christian enables him to discern properly.
 - 3. The new Christian can apply the simple truths of the first principles but as he grows and matures in Christ, gaining more knowledge and understanding, making application as he goes along, he increases his ability to understand and apply the more complex, difficult ones.
 - a. The recipients of the book of Hebrews had failed in this.
 - b. The spiritual growth of the recipients of Hebrews was not only stunted but they had reverted to infancy.
- D. For the good of the soul we need to develop the habit of weighing matters by God’s standard.
 - 1. Much trouble can be prevented: “An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.”
 - 2. No matter who you are, you can make mistakes.
 - a. Even the great made mistakes in discernment: Moses, David, etc.
 - b. “Great men are not always wise, nor do the aged always understand justice.” (Job 32:9)

II. Good and Evil

- A. Most people are against any attempt to classify good and evil in spiritual matters.
 - 1. To them, nearly all moral practices are good and almost all religious teachings are right.
 - 2. Some will use a flexible standard based on the individual.
 - a. No absolute right and wrong.
 - b. Every person becomes a “god” unto himself.
 - c. If this principle were true, no one could ever choose evil provided he thought he was doing good. (Prov. 14:12)
 - 3. Some ways are good, some evil. Some things are good, others evil.
 - a. Thinking and acting that it is good does not make the evil good.
 - b. “Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!” (Isa. 5:20)
- B. The right or wrong of a thing is not just a matter of personal thinking.
 - 1. Truth and right are facts presented in Scripture, one must change his mind to fit them rather than changing them to fit his way of thinking.
 - 2. It is more than futile to try to change right to fit oneself, it is an affront to God.

- C. The Bible speaks plainly of good and evil.
1. Good man. (Psa. 37:23) Evil man. (Psa. 140:1)
 2. Good works. (Matt. 5:16) Evil works. (Jas. 3:16)
 3. Good words. (1 Kings 12:7) Evil speaking. (Eph. 4:31)
 4. Good path. (Prov. 2:9) Evil course. (Jer. 23:10)
 5. Good advice. (Prov. 20:18) Evil counsel. (Isa. 7:5)
 6. Good name. (Prov. 22:1) Evil name. (Deut. 22:19)
 7. Good fruit (Matt. 7:17)—evil fruit (Matt. 7:18)
 8. Good heart. (Lk. 8:15) Evil heart. (Heb. 10:22)
 9. Good morals. (1 Cor. 15:33) Evil dealings. (1 Sam. 2:23)
 10. Good report. (Phil. 4:8) Evil report. (2 Cor. 6:8)

III. Biblical Failures in Discernment

- A. The young prophet who was deceived by a lie. (1 Kings 13)
- B. The foolish rich man. (Luke 12:16-21)
- C. Martha. (Luke 10:38-42)
- D. The Pharisees in Matthew 23:23-25.
- E. Those who brought to Jesus the woman taken in adultery. (John 8:3-11)
 1. They demanded the woman be stoned.
 2. Their mistakes:
 - a. They did not bring the man.
 - b. They made a spectacle by setting her in the midst of the crowd.
 - c. They did not care whom they hurt just so they carried out their point.
 - d. They beheld the sin in another's life but failed to see the sins in their own lives.
 - e. They pointed to another's sins in an effort to feel better about themselves.
 3. Jesus discerned the matter properly by showing more concern for the woman's future than her past.

IV. Some Guideposts for Wise Discernment

- A. Faith.
 1. Consider the choice of Moses. (Heb. 11:24-25)
 2. Faith led Moses to make a right decision.
- B. Hope. This also influenced Moses. (Heb. 11:26)
- C. Love.
 1. Consider John 14:23.
 2. Scripture speaks of "lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God." (2 Tim. 3:4)
- D. Courage.
 1. This will surely help in making right decisions. (Matt. 10:28)
 2. King Saul failed to discern properly because he feared the people. (1 Sam. 15:24)
- E. Caution. (Prov. 22:3)
 1. What looks good may not be good.
 2. What appears to be sweet may be bitter.
- G. Investigation.
 1. Never reach a decision of consequence without fully investigating.
 2. Have all the facts before condemning others or plotting a course for yourself.
 3. Deal with knowledge instead of presumption, gossip and rumors. (Prov. 13:6)

Conclusion

1. It is our duty to discern good and evil, throw out the evil and retain the good.
2. Much trouble arises in the church because of lack of discernment.

Determination

Text: 1 Corinthians 2:1-5

Introduction

1. Of the many things which could be said of the apostle Paul, that he was a determined individual could top the list.
 - a. Before his conversion. (Acts 9:1-2)
 - b. After his conversion. (Acts 20:17-24; Phil. 3:13-14)
2. This lesson will seek to instill such determination in each of us for it should characterize the life of every Christian. (2 Pet. 3:14)

I. Determination Defined and Illustrated

A. Definitions.

1. “1. Decided, resolved. 2. Firm, resolute.” (*Webster’s 7th Col. Dict.*, 226)
 - a. Resolute: “Firm determination, bold, steady, syn see faithful.” (Webster, 731)
2. “KRINO, primarily to separate, hence, to be of opinion, approve, esteem, Rom. 14:5; also to determine, resolve, decree, is used in this sense in..I Cor. 2:2.” (W.E. Vine, 306-307)
3. “To determine, resolve, decree.” (J.H. Thayer, 360) (cf. 1 Cor. 3:37 - “steadfast in his heart.”)

B. Illustrations.

1. Joseph: not to sin against God. (Gen. 39)
2. Daniel: to worship God. (Dan. 6)
3. Nehemiah: to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.
4. Paul: in the text and in life.

II. We Must Be Determined to Do the Right Thing

A. Many are determined but not for the right thing.

1. To do as they please.
2. To get their own way.
3. To do evil—even though they know better.
4. To have preeminence. (3 John 9)
5. To keep traditions. (Matt. 15:3)

B. Determination must be guided by the word of God. (2 Pet. 1:5)

1. Virtue: the determination to do right.
2. Must add “knowledge” to have virtue. (cf. 1 Thes. 4:1; 2:13)

III. What We Must Be Determined to Do

A. Know more of the word of God. (Heb. 2:1-3)

1. Since it is our guide, we must be familiar with it.
 - a. It is a lamp to our feet. (Psa. 119:105)
 - b. It gives understanding. (Psa. 119:104; Eph. 3:4)
2. It makes one approved. (2 Tim. 2:15; 2 Pet. 1:10)

- B. Grow as a Christian. (2 Pet. 3:18; 1 Pet. 2:1-2)
 - 1. Two elements necessary for growth: food and exercise.
 - 2. Love and stand for truth. (1 Cor. 16:13; Eph. 6:10)
- C. Serve the Lord faithfully. (1 Cor. 15:58)
 - 1. Requires self-denial. (Matt. 16:24-25)
 - 2. Service to the Lord is not something you do one week and forget the next. (Gal. 6:9)
- D. Go to heaven. (Acts 20:24; Phil. 3:13-14)

Conclusion

- 1. If you are determined to go to heaven, you will be determined to do all the things necessary to get there.
 - a. The grace of God and our determination will get us there.
 - b. We must be resolved to do the will of the Lord.
- 2. If we are not determined to go forward, our spiritual condition will deteriorate.
- 3. I am determined to do the best I can for the Lord. Will you join me?

Becoming Involved in Religion

Text: Matthew 7:13-14, 21

Introduction

1. Getting people involved, especially in religion, is a big problem.
2. To be involved in religion is the most important involvement because it deals with the soul and its eternal destiny.
3. It seems, though, that people would rather be involved in other things.
 - a. Some cannot see any immediate effect either negative or positive.
 - b. Most want immediate gratification.
4. One of the primary tasks of preaching is to stir people to involvement in religion.

I. Why People Fail to Become Involved in Religion

- A. They fail to recognize the value of the soul. (Matt. 16:26)
 1. The soul is valuable because it is eternal.
 - a. It is of unlimited duration having no end.
 - b. The body returns to dust but the soul continues on. (Eccl. 12:6-7)
 2. When one does not realize the soul's value, he is not interested in religion.
- B. They fail to recognize their lost condition.
 1. Examples.
 - a. A child lost in a department store who does not know he is lost will toddle merrily along not realizing the danger he is in.
 - b. The figure of a sheep as presented in Scripture. (e.g., Luke 15)
 2. The Son of Man came to seek and save the lost. (Luke 19:10)
 3. Who is lost?
 - a. All have sinned (Rom. 3:23) and the wages of sin is death. (Rom. 6:23)
 - b. Those in sin have no hope. (Eph. 2:12)
 4. To be lost means to:
 - a. Have forfeited God's blessings of love, mercy and kindness.
 - b. Be without hope.
 - c. Have no true peace.
 - d. Only be able to anticipate eternal punishment.

II. What It Means to Be Involved in Religion — Acts 2

- A. Peter preached the first gospel sermon.
 1. He preached about Jesus. (vv. 22-35)
 2. He proved Christ to be the Messiah. (v. 36)
 3. His sermon resulted in his listeners' recognition of their lost condition (v. 37) and their need for obedience. (vv. 38-40)
 4. This resulted in their involvement. (v. 41)
- B. There is more to religion than just primary obedience to the gospel.
 1. They continued steadfast. (v. 42)
 - a. Sometimes involvement and interest dwindles at this point—some want only to be members, no more.
 - b. Baptism is not an end but a beginning. (John 3:5; Rom. 6:3-4)

2. One must continue to be steadfast—strong towards, firm—in:
 - a. The Apostles’ teaching.
 - b. Fellowship.
 - c. The breaking of bread.
 - d. Prayers.
- C. Being a follower of Christ is not a temporary or occasional thing.
 1. It takes constant, active, faithful service unto God.
 2. There is no valid reason for not being involved.
 - a. “No one appreciates me. I can’t have a leading role.” (Acts 1:23; 15:22)
 - b. “The church is filled with hypocrites, sinners and other undesirables.”
- D. Total involvement requires that we:
 1. Be a living sacrifice—full consecration. (Rom. 12:1-2)
 2. Be active in the work of the Lord. What is your attitude? Is it one of:
 - a. Duty? “What must I do?”
 - b. Investigation? “What can I do?”
 - c. Willingness? “What shall I do?”
 3. Have transformed minds: from materialistic to spiritual.
 4. Have the desire to lead others to Christ. (Acts 26:29)

Conclusion: I Timothy 4:15-16

“Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all. Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.”

In the World but Not of the World

Text: John 17:14-16

Introduction

1. Did you feel out of place most of the time, at work or at school?
 - a. Is it something like a square peg trying to fit into a round hole?
 - b. Could it be you feel like a “sore thumb” sticking out from everyone else?
2. If so, you are not unique.
 - a. All who would be godly feel the same pressures while living in society.
 - b. Cross-bearing (Matt. 6:24) and persecution (2 Tim. 3:12) take different forms.
3. How can we practically live from day to day in the midst of other people from whom we differ greatly in values, standards, morals, etc., without being considered peculiar?

I. The Christian's Attitude Toward the World

A. Come out of it.

1. 2 Corinthians 6:17. “Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you.”
2. 2 Timothy 2:19. “Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: ‘The Lord knows those who are His,’ and, ‘Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.’”
3. Colossians 1:13. “He has delivered us from the power of darkness and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love.”
4. John 15:19. “If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.”
5. 2 Thessalonians 2:14. “To which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

B. Not love it. (1 John 2:15-17)

C. Not conformed to it. (Rom. 12:1-2)

D. Keep unspotted from it. (Jas. 1:27)

E. Be militant against it. (Eph. 6:12)

II. No Matter What You Do, Some Will Not Like You

- A. Jesus told His disciples that they would be hated without a cause. (John 17:14; 15:18-19,25)
- B. There is always the unfairness of unreasonable people. (2 Thes. 3:1-2)
- C. Those who are worldly will think you are strange. (1 Pet. 4:1-5)

III. What Can We Do to Make Sure We Have Done Our Part?

A. Be friendly.

1. Friendliness, not sourness, is to be a quality of every Christian.
2. John Wesley: “Sour godliness is the devil’s religion.”
3. Warmness draws people, coldness repels them.

B. Possess a humility that will cause you to mix and mingle with all classes of people.

1. Social, intellectual, financial or spiritual snobbery will never influence people for good.
2. Consider Philippians 2:3.

3. We can get down among people without getting down on their level of sin.
 - a. The example of Jesus. (Matt. 9:11)
 - b. The common people loved Jesus. No one loves or looks up to a snob.
- C. Be unselfish.
 1. Do not be self-centered. (Phil. 2:4)
 2. Be a “people person.”
- D. Be tolerant of others.
 1. Do not encourage sin but understand that others do not have the same understanding you have.
 2. Have the facts before you make judgments on people.
- E. Be sincere, truthful, honest and consistent.
 1. Consider Philippians 1:10.
 2. Do not feign warmth and friendliness.
 - a. Such must be natural and spontaneous.
 - b. Be genuine in what you do.
- F. Follow the golden rule. (Matt. 7:12)
- G. Be stable.
 1. Be a source of strength and security to others.
 2. Do not use others or lie or gossip about others.
- H. Have reasonable expectations about life.
 1. Unreasonable ones make for unhappiness constantly.
 2. The world is not all beautiful, people are not all fair, etc.

Conclusion

1. While being a light in the world, realize that people see the Lord and His church through you.
2. What do they see?
 - a. An unhappy, judgmental “kook” who is nothing more than a fanatic.
 - b. A reasonable, fair, honest, caring, compassionate person who tries to do what's right in every situation.
3. It is not easy to be in the world but not of the world.
 - a. Jesus never promised it would be.
 - b. He just promised glory eternally for trying. (1 Pet. 4:14-16)

Lifting Up Christ

Text: John 3:14-17

Introduction

1. The comparison Jesus makes in the text teaches a great truth about Himself.
2. He refers to an incident that took place in the wilderness as Israel journeyed from Egypt to Canaan.

I. The Lifting Up of the Serpent – Numbers 21:4-9

- A. The Israelites were again murmuring and speaking against God and Moses. (v. 5)
- B. The Lord sent fiery serpents among the people and many of them died. (v. 6)
- C. The people confessed their sin and begged Moses to pray to the Lord to take away the serpents from among them. (v. 7)
 1. After praying, Moses was instructed to make a serpent of brass and put it upon a pole.
 2. If one who had been bitten by a serpent looked upon the serpent of brass, he lived. (v. 9)
- D. A bitten Israelite was required to have enough faith to look upon the brass serpent that had been lifted up in order to be healed.
 1. His saving was by faith—God having been gracious in providing his salvation.
 2. The fact that salvation was by faith did not preclude the fact that the Israelite had to do something—in this case, look upon the brass serpent.

II. The Lifting Up of Jesus on the Cross – John 3:14-15

- A. Jesus establishes a link between the serpent in the wilderness and His death upon the cross.
 1. The world has been “bitten” by sin as the Israelites were bitten by the fiery serpents.
 2. Whoever looks upon the lifted Christ shall not perish but have eternal life.
- B. As the Israelites had to have more than faith, they had to do something—look upon the serpent, people today must have more than faith to be healed by Christ.
 1. They must have a faith that manifests itself in obedience to Christ—looking to Him. (Heb. 5:8-9)
 2. This analogy is the best commentary available to show that John 3:16 does not refer to belief alone but a faith that is manifested in obedience to the commands of Christ, looking to Him as Savior. (John 3:36)

III. The Lifting Up of Jesus by the Christian

- A. This is something each Christian must do as a “light in the world.” (Matt. 5:14-16)
- B. Lifting up Christ is done by:
 1. Preaching Christ crucified. (Gal. 3:1; 1 Cor. 1:18-23; 2:1-5; 2 Tim. 4:2; Rom. 6:17-18)
 2. Faithfully observing the Lord’s Supper. (1 Cor. 11:23-26)
 3. Living Christlike every day. (Gal. 6:14; Col. 3:17; 3:1-3; Rom. 12:1-2)
 4. Possessing the mind of Christ. (Phil. 2:3-5; 1 Pet. 4:1)
 5. Suffering as a Christian. (1 Pet. 4:14-16; 1 Pet. 2:21-24)
 6. Looking for His glorious appearing. (Titus 2:11-14; Matt. 24:42-44)

Conclusion

As Christ had to be lifted up on the cross and shed His blood for our sins, we need to lift Him up every day in our lives.

Evidence of Pardon

Text: Isaiah 55:7

Introduction

1. Pardon: “To absolve from the penalty for a fault or crime; to free from penalty as a person.”
2. Pardon is the only remedy for sin.
 - a. The penalty for sin is death. (Rom. 6:23)
 - b. Since all have sinned all need pardoned. (Rom. 3:23)
3. God is the source of the sinner’s pardon.
 - a. Since all sin is against Him, pardon must come from Him. (Psa. 51:4)
 - b. If the wicked forsakes his way, God will pardon him. (Isa. 55:7)
 - c. God sent His Son to die as a sacrifice to be able to pardon man’s sins. (2 Cor. 5:21)
4. In order for us to be truly happy, we must know that we have received this pardon.
 - a. Knowing you have been pardoned involves evidence.
 - b. What does Scripture reveal concerning the evidence that one has been pardoned of sins?

I. Man's False Evidences of Pardon

A. Feelings.

1. Feelings are the fruit of what we believe. (2 Thes. 2:10-12)
2. Feelings, though genuinely felt, can be wrong when they are based on that which is false.
 - a. Jacob’s feelings of loss over the supposed death of Joseph.
 - b. The woman who felt she was floating on air as evidence of her pardon.
 - 1) “Were you really floating on air?” “No.”
 - 2) “Then maybe you were not really saved.”
3. Joy accompanies salvation but it is the fruit of obedience. (Acts 8:39)

B. Conscience.

1. Paul possessed a good conscience even though he had done many things contrary to the will of God. (Acts 23:1; 2 Tim. 1:3)
2. Conscience by itself is not an adequate measure of pardon.

C. Being honest and sincere.

1. Pardoned people should be honest and sincere but honesty itself is no evidence of pardon. (Prov. 14:12)
2. Cornelius was honest and sincere but he needed words to save him. (Acts 11:14; 10:47-48)

D. Strange occurrences in one’s life.

1. A dream (Jer. 23:25). If a sign of anything, it might be of old age (Acts 2:17; cf. Heb. 1:1)
2. Seeing a light.
 - a. Saul saw one (Acts 9:3-4), but it did not grant him pardon. (Acts 22:16)
 - b. God’s word is our light. (Psa. 119:172)
3. Seeing an angel.
 - a. Cornelius saw one but it was no evidence of pardon. (Acts 10:2)
 - b. An angel who would speak anything other than the gospel is cursed and those who would heed him are also cursed. (Gal. 1:6-9)

II. Pardon Is Revealed in Scripture as a Matter of Certainty

- A. The apostles wrote with certainty to those who had received pardon.
- B. Some examples:
 - 1. Paul: 2 Corinthians 5:6-8; Romans 6:17-18; 1 Thessalonians 1:4; Ephesians 1:7.
 - 2. Peter: 1 Peter 1:2.
 - 3. John: 1 John 3:2.

III. The True Evidence of Pardon

- A. Pardon is in the mind of God.
 - 1. Man is converted but evidence of pardon must come from God.
 - 2. It is as certain as the Governor's seal on the pardon of a prisoner.
- B. The evidence of the spirits. (Rom. 8:16)
 - 1. There are two spirits mentioned: the Holy Spirit and man's spirit.
 - 2. The Holy Spirit bears witness **with** our spirit not **to** our spirit. (With: in agreement.)
- C. How does the Holy Spirit bear witness?
 - 1. It is a speaking spirit. (John 16:13; Acts 2:4; 1 Tim. 4:1)
 - 2. It directed men to infallibly record God's conditions of pardon. (1 Cor. 2:9-13; 2 Pet. 1:20-21; Eph. 3:1-5; Acts 2:4, 36-38)
 - 3. Our spirit must agree with the Holy Spirit if we are children of God or pardoned of our sins. (Rom. 8:16-17)
 - 4. The Scriptures are the words of the Holy Spirit.
 - a. The scriptures tell us what to do to be saved.
 - b. It is only when we know we have obeyed what they reveal as conditions for pardon that our spirit is in agreement with the Holy Spirit and we are the children of God—pardoned sinners.

Conclusion

When these two witnesses, the Holy Spirit and your spirit, agree, you have been pardoned of your sins, you are a child of God, His heir, a joint heir with Christ.

The Example of Philip

Introduction

1. Philip first comes to our attention in Acts 6 as one of the seven chosen for the work of benevolence in the early church.
 - a. Such a man was to have been of honest report, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom. (Acts 6:3)
 - b. Philip was not content to simply “serve tables.”
2. When persecution arose scattering the disciples, he went to the city of Samaria and preached Christ.
3. When Philip was having great success, God called him away to teach one sincere, searching soul. (Acts 8:26-27)
4. There are many lessons we can learn from Philip on the proper attitudes to have and the proper techniques to use to reach others.

I. Proper Attitudes to Reach Others

A. Obedience.

1. When God commanded Philip to leave Samaria and go to the road that led from Jerusalem to Gaza, he obeyed. (Acts 8:26-27)
 - a. “He arose and went.”
 - b. He obeyed God without question.
 - c. Even though he had great success in Samaria, when he was commanded to leave, he went.
 - 1) It may have sounded somewhat strange and irrational.
 - 2) He was a man who knew God’s way was best.
2. If we are going to be effective workers for the Lord, we must be submissive.
 - a. We must, at all times and at all cost, be willing to do what God wants us to do not what we want to do.
 - b. The will of God must always take precedence over our will.

B. A willingness to teach one as well as many.

1. God commanded Philip to leave the multitudes in Samaria and travel about 50 miles for one lost soul.
 - a. He was willing to travel that distance, more if necessary, to achieve God’s mission.
 - b. Such dedication takes real love.
 - c. He, like Jesus, was willing to leave the crowds for one individual.
2. We must understand that one soul is a large enough crowd to be concerned about.
3. We must be willing to leave the “ninety-nine” and bring that one lost soul back into safety. (Luke 15)

C. Unprejudiced.

1. The Ethiopian, though a proselyte, was still considered an outcast in the full sense of the word. (Deut. 23:1)
 - a. Since he was not entirely Jewish, he was in the same category as the Gentiles.
 - b. No ordinary Jew would dare talk to him about his soul.
 - c. It took a miracle for Peter to go into a Gentile’s house and teach the gospel. (Acts 10)
 - d. Yet, without hesitation, Philip was willing to teach a Gentile. (Acts 8:27)
2. We must be like Philip.

- a. We must be color-blind in doing personal evangelism.
 - b. We should look at the condition of the soul not the color of the skin or the size of the pocketbook.
 - c. Since neither God (Acts 10:34-35) nor Christ (Mark 16) shows partiality, why should we?
 - d. All need salvation (Rom. 3:23), therefore, all need the gospel, God's power to save. (Rom. 1:16)
- D. An urgency to reach others.
- 1. When the Spirit told Philip to join himself to the chariot, Philip "ran to him." (Acts 8:29)
 - a. He knew the urgent need the man had.
 - b. He did not waste time for there is none to waste.
 - 2. This kind of enthusiasm is desperately needed today.
 - 3. As the early church was very zealous when it came to soul-winning, we need to restore that same kind of zeal today.

II. Proper Techniques

- A. Ask questions.
- 1. Philip asked the Ethiopian a question to get the discussion started. (Acts 8:30)
 - 2. Not only did it serve as an "icebreaker," but also it showed a real concern.
 - 3. If we would do the same, we would win more souls to Christ.
 - 4. Questions arouse greater interest in study and discussion.
- B. Know and use the Scriptures.
- 1. When the Ethiopian asked him about a certain passage in Isaiah, Philip knew to whom the Scripture referred. (Acts 8:31-35)
 - 2. If we are to be effective teachers, we must know the Scriptures.
 - a. We cannot remain ignorant of God's word and expect to win souls. (Heb. 5:11-14)
 - b. Only the word of God can bring about salvation. (John 8:32; Rom. 10:17; Jas. 1:21)
- C. Preach Jesus.
- 1. After reading Isaiah 53, Philip began to preach "Jesus" to the Ethiopian. (Acts 8:35)
 - 2. We are not to teach opinions, "think-so's" and feelings.
 - 3. The only message that can save is "Jesus" for He alone has the words to eternal life. (John 14:6; Acts 4:12)
 - 4. Jesus is to be our drawing power and His word our message.
- D. Look for more opportunities.
- 1. Philip was not content in winning just one soul to Christ.
 - a. After baptizing the Ethiopian, he went on his way preaching to others. (Acts 8:40)
 - b. If we are going to be successful "fishers of men" we must cast our nets into the "deep" again and again.
 - c. The whole world lies in need before us.

Conclusion

- 1. We need more "Philips." We all need to be more like Philip.
- 2. He may not have been an apostle or as famous as Paul or Peter but he was a dedicated, effective servant of Jesus Christ.
- 3. We too can be and must be effective workers for the Lord.

Proper Priorities in Life

Text: Matthew 6:33

Introduction

1. One of the most common sins among those who claim to be children of God is the sin of misplacing emphasis.
 - a. Emphasizing the wrong things in life.
 - b. Making secondary things primary and primary things secondary.
2. God has made it plain that we must prioritize properly.
 - a. As in all things, we must look to God's word.
 - b. We must develop the attitude of accepting the Divine order.
3. We must all emphasize the proper things.

I. Things of Prime Importance in Life

- A. God's kingdom and His righteousness before material things. (Matt. 6:33)
 1. Salvation is to be the highest priority we have. (Matt. 16:26)
 - a. For it Jesus died. (Matt. 26:28; 1 Pet. 1:18-19)
 - b. For it we must live. (Rom. 12:1-2)
 2. The church of our Lord must take priority in our lives.
 - a. Jesus died for it—it is His bride, His body, for it He will come a second time to take it home. (Eph. 5; 1 Cor. 15:24)
- B. Righteousness before the making of money.
 1. "Principle" is more important than material gain. (Rom. 12:17; 1 Tim. 6:9-10)
 2. We must place God before "mammon." (Matt. 6:24)
 3. It was here the rich young ruler failed. (Matt. 19:20-22)
- C. The home before temporal prosperity.
 1. Many "pitch their tents toward Sodom" without concern for anything other than money.
 2. Parents are often too busy in their quest for prosperity that their children and the training of their children are neglected. (Eph. 6:1-4; Titus 2:4-5)
- D. The commandment to love before any other commandment. (Matt. 22:34-39)
 1. To love is important because "God is love." (1 John 4:16)
 2. It embraces all other commandments. (Rom. 13:8-10; 1 John 5:3)
- E. Self-correction before the correction of others. (Matt. 7:3-5)
 1. To reverse this is a common sin.
 2. We are inclined to be charitable with ourselves and severe with others. We ought to be severe with ourselves and charitable with others. (John 7:24; Rom. 2:1-3)
- F. Reconciliation before acceptable worship to God. (Matt. 5:23-24)
 1. "Gift" here means anything we may desire to offer the Lord—a prayer, song, money, etc.
 2. God accepts no gifts from hearts of malice. (Eph. 4:31-32)
 3. It is impossible to love God and hate a brother at the same time. (1 John 4:20-21)
- G. Following Christ before all things. (Luke 9:59-62)
 1. The men in the above text reversed the divine order.
 2. They made the mistake of placing **good** things before the **best** things.

Conclusion

If we expect to be with God in heaven, we must begin by stressing heavenly things. (Col. 3:1-4; 2 Cor 4:18)

What We Can Learn About Satan from Job

Introduction

1. Since those who sin are of the devil (1 John 3:8), we must:
 - a. Not give place to him. (Eph. 4:27)
 - b. Resist him. (Jas. 4:7)
2. Satan is determined to get people to serve him.
 - a. He walks about as a roaring lion. (1 Pet. 5:8)
 - b. He uses “wiles”—schemings. (Eph. 6:11)
 - c. We must not be ignorant of his devices. (2 Cor. 2:11)
3. To properly resist Satan we must be knowledgeable of him and the threat he poses to us.
 - a. We must go to God’s word to find out what he is and what he does.
 - b. The book of Job especially is helpful in enlightening us about Satan and his workings.

I. Who and What Is Satan?

- A. The supreme evil spirit.
- B. The adversary. (“Satan,” by definition means “adversary.”)
- C. The serpent. (Rev. 12:9; 20:2)
- D. Lucifer. (Isa. 14:12)
- E. Dragon. (Rev. 12:7)
- F. The god of this world. (2 Cor. 4:4)
- G. The prince of this world. (John 12:31)
- H. The prince of darkness. (Eph. 6:12)
- I. The accuser. (Rev. 12:10)
- J. The devil. (“Slanderer.”)
- K. A liar and the father of lies. (John 8:44)
- L. A roaring, devouring lion. (1 Pet. 5:8)

II. Satan and His Work as Seen in Job (1:6-12)

- A. He is accountable before God. (v. 6; 2:1)
 1. However unwilling he may be, like all created beings he is subject to divine authority.
 2. He is compelled to render account to God.
- B. God knows his mind. (v. 8)
 1. God is not provoking him here but rather he already knew what was on Satan’s mind.
 2. God already knew that Job was on the mind of Satan because there was no one like Job.
- C. He is behind the evils of the earth. (v. 7; 2:2)
 1. His is an unceasing activity.
 2. Consider 1 Peter 5:8.
- D. He is not omniscient.
 1. He cannot see into the mind of man.
 - a. He could not see into the mind of Job. (vv. 9-11; 2:10b)
 - b. He thought he knew what was in Job’s mind but he was mistaken and then defeated.
 2. God can see into the mind of man but He is divine, Satan is not.

- E. He can do nothing without divine approval.
 - 1. See Luke 22:31-32.
 - 2. Sometimes permission is granted (Job, Peter) and sometimes it is refused.
- F. With approval there is limitation.
 - 1. Satan was twice limited in regard to Job.
 - 2. He is limited in regard to you and me. (1 Cor. 10:13)
 - 3. Satan has absolutely no power against anyone beyond that which God allows much in the same way Pilate's power over Christ was only what God allowed. (John 19:11)
- G. In spite of what Satan may do or how we may suffer because of it, God still cares.

Conclusion

We must constantly be on guard against our adversary Satan but at the same time we must realize we can, with the help of God, overcome him.

Why Study Worship?

Introduction

1. Worship seems to be a simple thing but it is not.
 - a. Mankind has always struggled with worship to God.
 - b. Most worship offered in the name of Christ today is unacceptable to God.
2. Problems exist in worship today.
 - a. Four general problem areas exist: worshipers, practices, attitudes and faulty solutions.
 - b. Such problems can be solved by studying worship as God would have it done.

I. Problems with Worshipers

- A. Those who have never submitted to the gospel and its commands for the cleansing of the soul cannot properly worship God. (Matt. 7:21-23)
- B. The worship of hypocritical Christians is unacceptable to God. (1 Tim. 2:8; Psa. 29:2)
- C. Luke-warm, apathetic “Christians” are repulsive to God. (Rev. 3:14-16)

II. Problems with Unauthorized Practices

- A. Practices which originate with men make religion vain. (Matt. 15:8-9)
- B. Practices from the old law are unacceptable today.
 1. The old law has no authority today. (Matt. 5:17, Col. 2:14)
 2. All things must be done in the name of Jesus. (Col. 3:17; Matt. 28:18)
 3. Those who desire to keep any of the old law must keep all of it, even then they have fallen from grace. (Gal. 5:1-4)

III. Attitude Problems

- A. Formalism. Superficial worship in which one goes through the outward form of ritual and practice without sincerity or genuine feeling from the heart.
 1. This was a problem with the Jews. (Micah 6:6-8)
 2. It is a problem today when people:
 - a. Only mouth the words to songs.
 - b. Sleep through the sermon.
 - c. Constantly daydream.
 - d. Engage in nail-filing, checkbook balancing, writing notes, playing with children, etc.
- B. Apathy. Some seem to care less whether or not they are at services.
 1. Some are present only out of a sense of duty.
 2. Some are present only because of tradition.
 - a. They have attended the “church of Christ” all their lives.
 - b. They have been “churched” and not converted.
 3. Worship holds neither blessings nor thrills for the apathetic. It is just a routine through which they feel they must go.
- C. Irreverence. Some feel no need to be reverent while worshipping.
 1. Some seem to feel no need to be reverent before, during or after worship.
 2. Some—not just the young—misbehave, others joke around and “cut up.”
- D. Improper expectations. Some only desire to be catered to or entertained.

IV. Improper Solutions Which Only Cause More Problems

A. Quick fixes are often applied which fail to get to the heart of the problems.

B. These include:

1. Dimming the lights, holding hands, swaying when praying, etc., to solve cold formalism and make worship more meaningful and reverent.
2. Spontaneous worship, a change in order of worship, etc., to develop more zeal and enthusiasm.
3. Emotionalism. A false stirring of emotions based not on love for the Lord and His word but on externals which prey on the emotions not to deepen faith and love but to answer a lack of fervor.

Conclusion

Only true conversion to the Lord and complete submission to Him will solve the problems of worship.

What Is Worship?

Introduction

1. We must define worship as God used the term if we are going to know what it truly is.
 - a. In the King James Version the word “worship” is used to translate six different Greek words.
 - b. Thus, the modern dictionary definition is not sufficient to define worship as it is used by the inspired writers of the New Testament.
2. In order to understand and fully define worship we must look at those six Greek terms.
 - a. It is only then that we can understand what God means by “worship.”
 - b. An examination of those terms leads to three basic definitions of worship.

I. To Make Obedience, Do Reverence to, Suggesting an Action Being Performed Indicative of the Worshiper's Reverence for the One Being Worshiped

- A. “*Proskuneo*” is the most frequently used Greek word for worship being found some 60 times in the New Testament.
- B. It literally means “to kiss the hand to (toward) one, in token of reverence” (*Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon of the NT*, 548) and “to make obeisance, do reverence to.” (*Vine’s Expository Dictionary of NT Words*, 1258)
- C. This word probably comes the closest to meaning the same thing that we do when we use our English word “worship.”
- D. This word suggests some particular act or action being performed.

II. An Attitude of Reverence or Piety

- A. This definition is inherent in three of the Greek terms. These words do not necessarily include any particular action being performed.
- B. “*Sebomai*” means “to revere” and stresses “the feeling of awe or devotion” (*Vine*, op.cit., pp. 1258-1259) (Acts 16:14; 18:7; Matt. 15:9)
- C. “*Sebazomai*” appears only in Romans 1:25.
 1. Similar to “*sebomai*” because the attitude of the worshiper again seems to be the predominant thought.
 2. It means “to fear, be afraid, to honor religiously, to worship.” (Thayer, 572)
- D. “*Eusebeo*” is used in Acts 17:23.
 1. It means “to act piously toward.” (Vine, 1259)
 2. It generally reflects the attitude of the worshiper rather than the act performed.

III. Any Service We Perform in Our Lives in Obedience to God's Will and in Relationship to His Nature

- A. In a sense, all obedient service we do is to God’s glory and is, therefore, worshipping Him.
- B. “*Latreuo*” means “to serve for hire, to serve, to minister to, to render religious service or homage, to worship.” (Thayer, 372) (Phil. 3:3; Acts 7:42; 24:14; Heb. 10:2)
- C. “*Therapeuo*” means “to serve, do service to.” (Vine, 1259) (Acts 17:25)

Conclusion

“A consideration of these verbs shows that worship is not confined to praise; broadly it may be regarded as the direct acknowledgment of God, of His nature, attributes, ways and claim, whether by the outgoing of the heart in praise and thanksgiving or by a deed done in such acknowledgment.” (Vine, 1259)

Reasons for Worship

Introduction

1. God has always desired to be worshiped thus He has always commanded mankind to worship.
 - a. The fact that God commands it should be reason enough to do it.
 - b. Worship on command, though, will be lacking something because it is difficult to do anything properly when it is done merely out of a sense of duty.
2. There are reasons for worshipping God other than duty to command.
 - a. One who is properly motivated by those reasons will actively and fervently worship his God.
 - b. It is those who understand these reasons who will have their worship accepted by God.

I. To Express Love and Thanksgiving to God

- A. By its nature and design worship is an expression of love and devotion.
- B. Love for God, what He is and what He has done for man, should prompt worship.
 1. We love Him because He first loved us. (1 John 4:9)
 2. Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift. (2 Cor. 9:15)
- C. The Lord is the great God (Psa. 95:1-3) thus possessing qualities which should prompt worship of Him:
 1. His omnipotence. No limits to His power. (Jer. 32:17, 27)
 2. His omnipresence. He can be at every place at the same time. (Psa. 139:7-12)
 3. His holiness. He is perfectly holy, totally untainted by sin. (Isa. 1:4; 5:19, 24)
 4. He is love. (1 John 4:8)

II. To Express One's Desire to Submit to the Will of God

- A. God has commanded His children to assemble to worship Him. (Heb. 10:24-25)
- B. Such assembling shows one's willingness to be submissive to God's will—a necessity to please God. (Matt. 7:21)
- C. God's will is purposeful.
 1. It is for man's ultimate good.
 2. Submission to it acknowledges God's superior wisdom.

III. To Keep Saved

- A. Every worship assembly should strengthen the bond between the Christian and God.
- B. Those things God has included in worship are a major portion of His design to keep His children saved. Consider:
 1. Singing. Participants give and get instruction, encouragement and admonition from one another.
 2. Prayer. Edifies and strengthens those present.
 3. Instruction in the word of God. Those who heed and apply it will be more of what God would have them to be.

IV. To Seize the Opportunity to Learn

- A. The Christian is always to be learning. (Matt. 11:28; 2 Pet. 1:5; Jas. 1:21)

- B. Worship assemblies provide opportunities to learn.
 - 1. God's people under the Old Law gathered to hear and learn God's word. (Neh. 8:1-8)
 - 2. Much can be gained when God's children gather to study His word and praise Him in worship.

V. To Provide a Source of Strength for You and for Others

- A. Jesus is the primary source of strength to the Christian. (Phil. 4:13)
- B. God intended for Christians to be together so they could draw strength from one another in order to keep strong in the faith. (Rom. 1:11-12)

VI. To Edify Others

- A. Christians are to edify each other. (Rom. 14:19) They are to:
 - 1. Do things which edify others in Christ. (Rom. 14:19)
 - 2. Bear one another's burdens. (Gal. 6:2)
 - 3. Encourage the faint-hearted and support the weak. (1 Thes. 5:14)
 - 4. Lift up hands that hang down. (Heb. 12:12)
- B. Since much of what God has included in worship has been designed to edify, one should always whole-heartedly participate.

VII. To Set a Good Example for Those Outside of Christ

- A. Dedication to Christ and devotion to worship impress others.
- B. Faithful attendance to worship shows the Lord means more to one than any earthly thing.
- C. Others can be won to Christ by the good example and strong influence of a dedicated worshiper of God.

Conclusion

The more one knows, understands and appreciates the nature of God, the more he will want to praise Him in worship.

Assembling for Worship

Introduction

1. There seems to have always been those who claim to be Christians who minimize the need to assemble with other Christians for worship.
2. The church, since its inception, has assembled on a regular basis.
 - a. The infant church in Jerusalem. (Acts 2:42)
 - b. The church in Corinth, in spite of their abuses, still regularly met for worship. (1 Cor. 11:17-34; 16:1-2)

I. The Need to Assemble

- A. God, in His wisdom, saw the need for His children to assemble with one another.
 1. All of the “acts” of worship could be done by the individual in his own home.
 2. God’s plan does not allow one to remain independent.
- B. God understands that by assembling with those of “like precious faith” they would be strengthened, therefore, He commands them not to forsake assembling. (Heb. 10:24-25)
- C. Christians are to anticipate the assemblies so that they can stimulate one another to greater love for the Lord, dedication to His cause and activity in His service.
 1. It is hard to understand why one who claims to be a Christian and to love God would seek to absent himself as much as he can from assembling with the church.
 2. Flimsy excuses and improper questions show that the individual is not really committed to Christ.
- D. Attendance is a barometer of faithfulness.
 1. If one lacks the determination to assemble in the Lord’s presence with His disciples, he usually has already forsaken many other, if not all, religious activities.
 2. As a fever is but a symptom of an infection, the real problem is not a lack of attendance it is **a heart that has grown cold or is filled with carnal things and ways.**

II. The Danger of Overemphasis

- A. While attendance at worship assemblies is important, we must not overemphasize it.
- B. There is more to being a faithful child of God than just being present at all services of the church.
- C. A false sense of security can be developed.
 1. One may think all is well with his soul just because he attended services.
 2. One could be a regular attender who has neglected to do the good works Christ wants him to do. (Eph. 2:10)

Conclusion

- 1 One cannot overestimate the untold influence for good he can have on others by seeking the kingdom of God first (Matt. 6:33) and by making attendance at worship services one of his highest priorities.
- 2 Conversely, one’s influence for evil is just as great when he fails to attend as he should.

Worshiping in Truth

Text: John 4:19-24

Introduction

1. Truth is:
 - a. The “word” of God. (John 17:17)
 - b. “True teaching or faith...divine reality, revelation.” (*Kittel’s Theological Dict. of the NT*)
2. Worshiping “in truth” is to worship according to the faith revealed in Scripture. (Jude 3; Gal. 1:11f)

I. Worship: God Has Always Commanded How

- A. Patriarchal times. The example of Cain and Abel. (Gen. 4:4-5; Heb. 11:4)
- B. Mosaic period. In the law given through Moses, God specified in great detail how the Israelites were to worship.
 1. God left nothing to their determination.
 2. Those who tried to alter His pattern were severely punished. (Lev. 10:1-2)

II. The Standard for Worship Today: The New Testament

- A. The New Testament is our standard for worship because:
 1. Christ possesses “all authority.” (Matt. 28:18)
 2. All things are to be done in Christ’s name. (Col. 3:17)
 3. Christ is God’s exclusive spokesman today. (Heb. 1:1-2)
- B. The Old Testament is no authority in religion today.
 1. It has been taken out of the way. (Col. 2:14)
 2. It was fulfilled by Jesus. (Matt. 5:17)
 3. To attempt to justify one’s practices by the Old Testament today is to fall from grace. (Gal. 5:4)
- C. No one has the right to add anything to worship that is not found in the New Testament (Matt. 15:8-9) or to eliminate anything God has commanded. (Rev. 22:18-19)

III. What We Are to Do

- A. Our practices must come from the New Testament if we are to properly express true worship to God.
- B. The first century church, under the guidance of the apostles, worshiped God by assembling on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7) to:
 1. Partake of the Lord’s Supper. (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:23-27)
 2. Pray to the Father. (1 Cor. 14:15; 1 Tim. 2:8)
 3. Sing praises to God. (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; 1 Cor. 14:15)
 4. Contribute of their means to the work of the Lord. (1 Cor. 16:1-2)
 5. Engage in and/or hear the preaching and teaching of the gospel. (Acts 20:7)
- C. Since nothing else is authorized, nothing else is to be done.

Conclusion

To worship “in truth,” one must do those things the first century church did—those things authorized by Jesus Christ in His gospel.

Worshiping in Spirit

Text: John 4:19-24

Introduction

1. Stated in John 4:24 is the principle which is to guide worshipers as long as the kingdom of Christ stands.
2. For worship to be acceptable to God it must be offered “in spirit and truth.”

I. Worshiping in Spirit Is a Matter of Attitude

- A. To “worship in spirit” is to worship with the proper attitude.
 1. This is consistent with all that God demands from man.
 2. Obedience to God must be “from the heart” for Him to be pleased. (Rom. 6:17-18)
- B. Some examples of improper attitudes.
 1. The “weariness” of the Jews during the time of Malachi. (Mal. 1:6-14)
 - a. They were still performing the duties of worship but with the wrong attitude.
 - b. God had no “pleasure” in them and would not accept their worship because it was not from the heart.
 2. The hypocrisy of King Saul. (1 Sam. 15:1-23)
 - a. Saul had disobeyed God’s commands in order to have animals to sacrifice.
 - b. “To obey is better than sacrifice.” (v. 22)
 - c. Saul was exalting himself not God.
 - d. To genuinely express love for God is to obey Him. (John 14:15)

II. Elements of Worshiping in Spirit

- A. Obedience.
 1. The attitude of humble obedience which should characterize us every day must carry over to our worship.
 - a. Those who have no desire to obey God on a daily basis will also lack the desire to worship and it will become a “weariness” to them.
 - b. The hypocrite will soon tire of “putting on a show.”
 2. God desires worshipers who are holy. (Psa. 24:3-4; 1 Tim. 2:8; Psa. 29:2)
- B. Sincerity.
 1. Worship should be offered out of love and a genuine desire to please God.
 - a. Worship services should be viewed as moments of joy not hours of drudgery and suffering.
 - b. “I was glad when they said to me, ‘Let us go into the house of the Lord.’” (Psa. 122:1)
 2. Those who worship out of a sense of duty or those to whom worship has become a chore cannot possibly be worshiping in the proper spirit.
- C. Edification.
 1. The worshipers are to consider one another. (Heb. 10:24-25)
 2. In worship assemblies all things are to be done unto edifying. (1 Cor. 14:26)
- D. Order.
 1. All things are to be done decently and in order. (1 Cor. 14:40)

2. God is not the author of confusion but of peace. (1 Cor. 14:33)
 3. While we must be careful not to allow worship services to become so regimented that they become cold, formalistic and stilted, at the same time we must guard against such abuses of order as casualness or spontaneous worship.
- E. Understanding. (1 Cor. 14:14-15)
1. One who does not understand what he is doing or why he is doing it accomplishes nothing and his worship is unacceptable.
 2. One must sing with understanding to make sure he is not singing a lie. One cannot “amen” a prayer he has not heard or understood because he may be giving his assent to that which is in opposition to the will of God.
- F. Pleasing God.
1. Worship is to please God and not man. (Gal. 1:10)
 - a. Worship is designed to praise God and to instruct and strengthen man.
 - b. Worship is not given to entertain man.
 2. Thinking that worship is to please man leads to several abuses.
 - a. Songs are chosen with an emphasis on the beauty of the music and its arrangement rather than on the words and their meaning.
 - b. Sermons are preached that stress levity and brevity rather than the needs of the hearers.
 - c. Prayers are offered in eloquent phrasings to impress those present rather than to humbly approach the throne of God.

Conclusion

1. God must be worshiped with proper spirit.
2. Let us monitor our attitude to make sure that it is what it should be so that God is glorified and that our worship is acceptable.

Emotions In Worship

Text: Nehemiah 8:1-9

Introduction

1. Outsiders have often characterized the church and its services as cold and lacking emotion.
2. In reality, the worship of God is to be a time of great emotions.

I. The Emotion in Worship In Nehemiah – Nehemiah 8:1-9

- A. The meeting was enthusiastically attended by all of the people. (v. 1)
- B. The preacher:
 1. Opened the book. (v. 5)
 2. He read in the book distinctly. (v. 8)
 3. He “gave the sense.” (v. 8)
- C. The reaction of the people. They:
 1. Were attentive. (v. 3)
 2. Cried “Amen, Amen!” (v. 6)
 3. Bowed their heads and worshiped. (v. 6)
 4. Wept. (v. 9)

II. The Emotion in Worship in the Great Throne Scene in Revelation 4 and 5

- A. The worship of the Father. (Rev. 4:8-11)
- B. The worship of the Lamb, the Son. (Rev. 5:1-12)

III. The Emotion in Worship in the Very Avenues (Expressions) of Worship Themselves

- A. How can one partake of the Lord’s Supper worthily without being moved emotionally? (1 Cor. 11:27)
- B. How can one sing, making melody in his heart unto the Lord without emotion?
 1. Joy: “Marching to Zion,” “Sunshine in My Soul.”
 2. Gratitude: “I Stand Amazed,” “Love Lifted Me.”
 3. Dependence: “Be With Me Lord.”
 4. Love: “My Jesus I Love Thee,” “Oh, How I Love Jesus.”
 5. Fear: “What Will Your Answer Be?” “Prepare to Meet Thy God.”
- C. How can one pray with a consciousness of the God whom he petitions without reverence, fear and genuine emotion?
- D. Even as one gives, he is to do so with emotion. (2 Cor. 9:7)

Conclusion

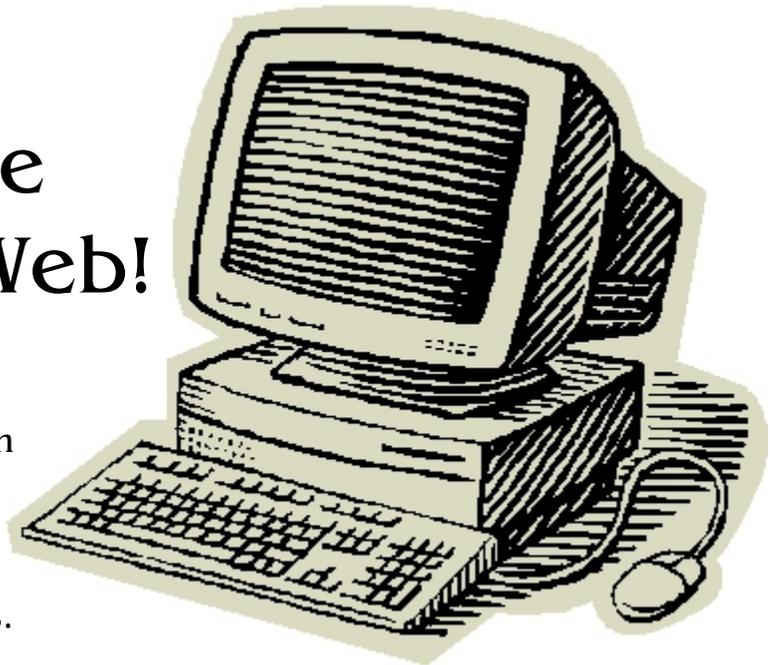
1. Emotion belongs in the life of the Christian. It also belongs in his worship.
2. Let us all seek to have that kind of heart that moves with genuine emotion as we worship our God.

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