

University Heights Church of Christ

BULLETIN

December 14, 2008

When People Obey the Gospel

Simon the sorcerer obeyed the gospel. (**Acts 8:13, Mark 16:16**) Obeying the gospel brought Simon into association with other repentant baptized believers. Unknown to Simon and the rest of the repentant, baptized believers in that group at Samaria, Simon brought into that association some wrong ideas and potential influences from the life Simon lived as an alien sinner before hearing and obeying the plan of salvation. If other Christians allowed Simon's sinful thinking and actions to influence them to think and act as Simon did they would also be wrong. The devil slipped into an association of repentant, baptized believers an evil influence riding in a new convert. Each convert shares to some extent with Simon. When we are converted we come into association with other repentant, baptized believers still retaining unintended and unrecognized wrong ideas and wrong information that is in conflict with the truth that is revealed in the Bible. Each of us has the personal responsibility to God, to ourselves and to others to use the Bible to correct our information and ideas where the Bible indicates that our information or ideas are wrong. That is how we grow by the word of God.

2 Peter 2: 2 "*As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that you may grow thereby: 3 If so be you have tasted that the Lord [is] gracious.*"

Spiritual growth for every convert is the act of replacing every false thing in our thoughts and actions with the truth from the word of God. In spiritually healthy Christians replacing false ideas with the truth from God's word does not stop at baptism. Spiritual growth is, study God's inspired word, compare to self, repent, study God's inspired word, compare to self, repent, study God's inspired word, compare to self, repent, study God's inspired word, compare to self, repent, as long as we draw breath on earth. What is true of the growth of each Christian is also true of the local church of which each Christian is a member. Each church grows spiritually because the members of that church grow spiritually. It is the wisdom of God that organized the kingdom of God that way. Growth comes from God through His inspired word directly to each child of God and through that Christian to the local church of which that Christian is a member. If a church does not grow in spiritual strength it is because the Christians who are members of that church are not growing in spiritual strength. In the Book of Revelation the churches of Asia that had internal spiritual problems had those internal spiritual problems because they had members that had those spiritual problems.

During the period of history called the "**Restoration**" multitudes of people realized that the only true source of religious authority on earth is the Holy Bible. They came to understand that for every person that has lived since the death of the apostles, in the first century AD, the only true source of religious authority is the New Testament. Only the New Testament is able to dictate what true religion is. During the "**Restoration**" many understood that the children of God must speak as the oracles of God (**1 Peter 4:11**). That knowledge is what brought them out of the false religions that they had followed before their conversion. Studying the Holy Bible made them aware of the unique position of the New Testament as the final revelation of God for humankind. Most of them came out of their former false paths with a good understanding of the plan of salvation that is taught in the New Testament but with many other false positions that were not, in their conversion, corrected. Their problem was that like Simon the sorcerer they carried out of the old association and into the new a large number of ideas and attitudes that were just as unscriptural as the ones that they had recognized and corrected.

To add to the confusion there was also the problem of people who attached themselves, not because of love for truth or respect for God's inspired word, or a desire to speak as the oracles of God, but because of family or social influence. They did what friends, family, or associates did for social, not spiritual reasons. They had influence and they had no reservations about suggesting and supporting things that were completely unscriptural.

Many even of those who did profess to be guided by the New Testament alone were actually only guided by the New Testament alone, in a very narrow area of the entire New Testament message. That made many of their actions inconsistent with their professed devotion to the proper principle of the application of God's word. Their influence, and the confusion that arose from their inconsistencies, diminished the force of the faith.

Numbers of converts that came out of unscriptural religions brought with them unscriptural concepts such as conventions, associations, special days, church works, unscriptural organizational structure, organizations, and many other wrong things. Most **practiced** the clergy laity system while claiming that the concept is unscriptural. Many did not clearly recognize the place or work of the local church or of its overseers. All of this ignorance of God's word had devastating effects on the growth of God's word in human hearts and soon brought into being new religions that are just as unscriptural as any of the products of past ages of disrespect for the inspired word of God. However, in all of this chaos there have been those who understand and who continue to understand that the inspired word of God is not just the standard by which you first become associated with a church of Christ and then lay aside. They understand that the inspired word of God is the standard by which you correct every false idea until the end of your life or until the end of time. The process of learning God's will and obeying it has to continue as long as a Christian or a local church has a false idea about anything. That process of coming to understand, believe and obey the truth on each and every point is the daily work of every Christian and of every local church.

No Christian and no local church can continue to grow by the sincere milk of the word that does not understand that spiritual growth is an every day process of study and application of the word of God to everything.

Every Christian and every local church is constantly bombarded with false ideas. The only way to combat that mass of misinformation is to **know and understand the truth from God's inspired word.** Winds of **appealing false doctrines** and **delightfully inviting fads of wrong things that pervert right thinking among the religious are a daily reality.** In order to be able to do everything God wishes for us to do without doing anything that God does not wish for us to do we must **let the inspired word of God speak to us day by day about everything.** Baptism does not **wash away a convert's ignorance of God's revealed will.** Only honest, careful, prayerful study of God's inspired word will do that. Being baptized for the remission of sins does not make a convert **immune to confusion and delusion by future cleverly presented errors.** Knowing and honestly and continually seeking to obey the truth is the only thing that can possibly do that. **The truth will make me free only if God gets the truth into me.**

Remember To Pray For

The loved ones of **Bill Baker** in their loss at his death
Dallis and Alma Isaacs
Francis Nations
Mary Jane Frost
Melanie Bilye
Rick Shamas
Bonnie Wells
Sarah Phillips
David Alford
Carol Bach
Marian Lyda
Edith Tirey
Lucy Hale
Pamela Clayton
Ella Wells, and her family
Lorene Pagan
Freddie Ward
David and Chessie Harwell
Donna Caldwell
Mabel Greene
Tony Tyree
Ruth Brundige
Cindy Miller
Christie Ellis
Shirley Lewis
Brady Gibbons
Gail Hunter
Larry Flannery
Donnie Joseph
Cheryl Spear
Lanny Hiller
Charity and Abdiel Pallafox
Helen Stephens
Chris Handshoe
Jeffrey Howerton
Addison Pervine
Carl Stripplehoff
Tom Kemp
Freda Blakey

Peter predicted hard times for God's people because of the presence of false teachers and the popularity of the false doctrines that the false teachers taught.

2 Peter 2:1 "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privately shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. 2 And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of."

The popularity of false doctrine has put the New Testament in the shadows, as an influence in the practice of religion on this earth. For example in the New Testament the churches commemorated the death of Jesus but not the birth of Jesus.

Thoughts

What should be my attitude toward God?

Philippians 2: 12 "Wherefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. 13 For it is God which works in you both to will and to do of [his] good pleasure."

Both Peter and Jude warned of the evil influence of those who do not fear God.

2Peter 2: 10 "But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous [are they], self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities. 11 Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord. 12 But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption;"

Jude 8 "Likewise also these [filthy] dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities. 9 Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke you. 10 But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves. 11 Woe to them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core."

Cain chose to worship God Cain's own way, (even when God objected) killed his god-fearing brother and lied to God. Balaam had the audacity to go back and ask for another answer from God when the wages of sin went up as if the will of God depended upon the price a sinner was willing to pay. Core treated God's choice as if it was Core's right to change it. All of those examples are examples of absolute fearlessness in the face of God. There are times when fearlessness is a good thing, but when we are dealing with God fearlessness is the absolute ultimate foolishness.

It is not easy to fear God. Cain apparently was in direct contact with God and still did not fear God. Balaam was a prophet through whom God spoke and yet was not afraid to act as if God's will was subject to change according to price. Core was an eyewitness of all of the manifestations of the miraculous power God showed in Egypt and in the wilderness and still did not fear God enough to accept God's choice among the Israelites.

It is hard for us to fear God. God is invisible. We are surrounded and influenced by smart and able people who do not fear God. On every side are intelligent people who apparently never give God or God's inspired word a thought or even intentionally disobey God and God does not strike them dead or defeat their plans or anything we can see.

IT IS NOT EASY TO FEAR GOD BUT IN ORDER TO BE SAVED WE MUST FEAR GOD.

Notes

Men's business meeting will be today at 2:30 PM

Singing in worship is to be done with an attitude of grace or thanks to God.

Colossians 3:16 "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."

Singing in worship is to teach and encourage.

Colossians 3:16 "teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs"

Singing is the only music that the New Testament teaches Christians to use in worship. That does not please a lot of humans but it is singing God said He wants.

Seems to me that it would be hard to have a sincere attitude of thanks to God while at the same time disobeying God, as I would be doing if I used instrumental music in worship.

Schedule of Services

Sunday Morning

Bible Classes 9:45am

Worship Service 10:45am

Sunday Evening

Worship Service 6:00pm

Wednesday Evening

Bible Studies for all ages 7:30pm

Monthly Song Service

First Friday 7:30pm

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**COME STUDY THE BIBLE
AND WORSHIP WITH US**

**HELP GOD'S WORD GROW
LEARN IT • OBEY IT • TEACH IT**