

The University Heights Messenger

November 21, 2010

The Heart And Lip Service

By H.E. Phillips

The piercing question of Paul in Galatians 4:16 is in order: **“Have I then become your enemy by telling you the truth?”** Why do we foolishly and carelessly allow ourselves to be carried away from the truth in our daily lives? Why do we talk about doing better, and promise both ourselves and our brethren that we will repent of indifference and get to work in the kingdom of Christ, but never make that change? Why do we hear more and more brethren express alarm because they are not able to pray and study the Word of God as they once did?

The answers to these questions may be found in our own hearts where our real goals and desires live. An individual needs to be urged to do more serious soul searching with special emphasis on his spiritual and moral concepts. We need to really **“Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?--unless indeed you fail to meet the test?”** (2 Corinthians 13:5).

Jesus told the Pharisees of their hypocrisy and referred to the prophet Isaiah, which He applied to them in Matthew 15: 8, 9: **“This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrine the**

commandments of men.” Of course, they were offended after they heard this (verse 12), but Jesus said to His disciples: **“Let them alone; they are blind guides. And if the blind lead the blind, both will fall into a pit”** (verse 14).

One could say, “Look what we are doing, we draw nigh unto God with our singing, praying, and preaching the Word, and in addition, we praise and honor God with our lips and promise to serve Him. What more could one ask?” Every word of this could have been said by those hypocritical Pharisees to whom Christ spoke. The problem was not that they did not give vocal praise and lip service, but that their heart was far away and not involved at all in their professed praise to God.

I could follow the typical line of many prayers which we hear today: *“Father, we thank thee for this wonderful opportunity to meet here and worship thee in spirit and truth,”* when in fact I could care less whether I am present upon the occasion or not. And the *“wonderful opportunity to meet here”* is really a painful burden I wish I could avoid, and I do dodge the “opportunity” every time I can. I could also sing loud the words of the song: *“My Jesus, if ever I loved thee, tis now,”* and not give a single thought to Jesus, love, or time. This lip praise and verbal honor is the cold, lifeless formalism that now enshrouds churches all across the land. Because the lifeless body does nothing

more than lip praise and promise, the commandments of men are brought into play to try to pump some life or activity into an otherwise cold, dead body of people.

Back to some of the questions at the beginning of this article which we should be asking ourselves. We must realize that without heart action, the lip and hand service is nothing. While all responsible people have the capacity to see, hear, and understand with their hearts, by comparison, not many of them use the heart in praising God. The heart becomes dull of hearing, gross and calloused so that what is seen and heard does not effect any change in the thinking, believing, and obeying from the heart.

The heart hardened by the practice of sin explains why the preaching of the gospel in the most persuasive manner sometimes produces little more than blank stares, vague promises, and a few attempts at lip service. We must bring heart worship to God if we expect it to be accepted.

IN NEED OF PRAYERS:

Janet Brundige's father is being treated for congestive heart failure.

Jeff Howerton is suffering with a staff infection in his lower leg. He is receiving care in Cardinal Hill and will likely be there for at least another week. He welcomes visitors but prefers they come in the evening.

Rick Small is suffering with a painful strain in his back.

Our members: **Glenn Davis, The Tirey's, Glenn Kimberlin, Janet Brundige**

Others: **Vera Howerton, Ann Sego, John Bennett, Dennis Brennan, Sara Phillips, Robert and Sarah Brundige, Kay Montgomery, Donald Dawson, Jean Gartland, Wes Kidd, Vera Howerton, Gail Stein, Glenn Goldy, Shannon Gilbert, Chuck McDavitt,**

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Streaming Bible study every Tuesday at 7. This time we will begin at Mark 3:1. Please remember to tell people about this effort.

The congregational meeting will be next Lord's Day at 5.

BIBLE READING SCHEDULE

Sunday: Jer 2-3, Ps 104, Rom 1

Monday: Jer 4-5, Ps 105:1-25, Rom 2

Tuesday: Jer 6-7, Ps 105:26-45, Rom 3

Wednesday: Jer 8-9, Ps 106:1-23, Rom 4

Thursday: Jer 10-12, Ps 106:24-48, Rom 5-6

Friday: Jer 13-14, Ps 107:1-22, Rom 7

Saturday: Jer 15-17, Ps 107:23-43, Rom 9-11

SERMON TOPICS:

Sunday AM. "But You Say..." 1
(Malachi 1:2,6-8, 13)

Sunday PM. Neal Erickson