

The University Heights Messenger

June 20, 2010

The “Few” In Sardis By Robert Turner

Many “good” brethren tell me they know the congregation of which they are members is engaged in practices for which they have no divine authority. They deplore the situation--to hear them tell it--but are horrified at any suggestion that they might have to worship elsewhere. Were there not a “few...in Sardis” acceptable to God--and they were not told to leave?

The severing of congregational ties is not a thing to be taken lightly. Much harm has been done by self-willed people who run hither and yon, too immature to establish a happy working relationship with others. If those who play hide-and-seek with the mythical “perfect” local church could find such a group, their admittance would change its status. “Perfection” for saints, individually and collectively, consists of a *striving*--forgetting the past and pressing toward the divine goal (Phil. 3:13-15).

But when it becomes apparent that such an attitude toward God’s Word has been abandoned--when brethren make no effort to “prove all things” by the Scriptures, and resist honest efforts to study the “issues” in the light of God’s Word--does the situation in Sardis (Rev. 3:1-6) justify my condoning, supporting, and being a part of this church in error?

Revelation 3:1-6 describes conditions in a church “ready to die”; a church being warned that God will not long tolerate such conditions. It is ridiculous to think that God would ask the “few” to accept, condone, and support on a permanent basis what He would soon deny. Acknowledging the “few” who had not “defiled their garments” shows that we are judged as individuals; and

certainly does not relieve these “few” of individual responsibility to fight error. On the contrary, it indicates that they must have been “fighting the good fight”--opposing the error and seeking to restore the fallen.

In the previous letter (Rev. 2:18-f) Christ censured the brethren at Thyatira “because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel--”. To “suffer” is to allow, to refuse to oppose. The Lord gave time to repent; but said that if they did not repent “I will kill her children with death.” Does this teach that we may “allow” sin to go unopposed in the church today, and reap no ill effect? It certainly does not!

Revelation 2:1-7 records the status of the church in Ephesus *at the time of the writing*. At *that* time the Lord continued to recognize that congregation, but said, “repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.”

The fact that there were a “faithful few” in Sardis--at the time that letter was given--offers no solace for those who compromise convictions and refuse to accept their individual responsibilities to serve the Lord. A Jezebel, or Diotrophes (3 John 9) can control a church only because these so-called “good” brethren allow and support their action. These robes are not white. They are stained with the blood of martyrs whose plea for purity was drowned in the hypocritical cry, “Preserve the Party!”

The Summer Series

It’s that time of year again! Tomorrow morning the Summer Series kicks off. Brother Brent Hunter of the Oldham Woods congregation (just outside of

Louisville) will be here to speak to us. In the mornings he will be discussing key moments in the early life of our Lord. In the evenings Brent will be speaking on God's directions in making our homes happier and stronger.

It takes much work on the part of a preacher in preparing for a gospel meeting, doubly so when there are morning classes, *triple* so when the meeting is on short notice. Already Brent will have spent many hours in preparation and he will spend many more in transit and delivering the messages themselves. Let us be sure to tell him how much we appreciate his efforts and his willingness to help us when we found ourselves in desperate straights due to the recent health problems of Maurice Barnett who had been scheduled to be with us this week.

Though kind words of thanks and encouragement are always appreciated by a preacher, attendance and attention are appreciated much more. Whenever I conduct a meeting and the congregation is well represented and attentive, I am excited to tell the brethren at my "home" church about them. It is always nice to receive favorable reports of the eagerness and willingness of our brethren in other congregations to gather to study and worship together. In such a way a local church's "faith is proclaimed in all the world" (Romans 1:8). Let's provide Brother Hunter something favorable to report of us!

IN NEED OF PRAYERS:

Glenn Kimberlin remains house bound.

Glen Davis continues to need prayers as he experiences some difficulties.

Richard Brundige was hospitalized with a slow heart beat. He is awaiting the result of a test.

Ruel Baker has been diagnosed with pneumonia for the second time in just a few weeks.

Robert Brundige, Richard's brother, is in Parkside Manor in Cynthiana dealing with some issues. **Sarah** Brundige, Richard's mother, is in Cambridge Place Nursing Home and in need of our prayer.

Reid Braswell passed on to his reward last week. Let's remember his family.

Please remember the **Miller family** as they mourn the passing of a loved one in Jackie's great aunt, as well as the continued hospitalization of her uncle, **Harley**, who is now facing issues with swelling.

Let's also remember **Esmeralda Agustin, David Day and his wife, Michelle Oxendine, Gail Stein, Shannon Gilbert, Harley Miller, Chuck McDavitt, and David Blakeman.**

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Our Summer Series begins tomorrow!

BIBLE READING SCHEDULE FOR 6/20-6/26:

Sunday:1 Sam 29-31, Ps 119:97-104, Eph 2-3

Monday:2 Sam 1-2, Ps 119:105-112, Eph 4

Tuesday:2 Sam 3-4, Ps 119:113-120, Eph 5-6

Wednesday:2 Sam 5-6, Ps 119:121-128, Phil 1-2

Thursday:2 Sam 7-9, Ps 119:129-136, Phil 3-4

Friday:2 Sam 10-11, Ps 119:137-144, Col 1-2

Saturday:2 Sam 12-13, Ps 119:145-152, Col 3-4

SERMON TOPICS:

Sunday AM. Premillennialism 3 (The nature of the kingdom)

Sunday PM.

REMINDER

Sermon requests, prayer requests, and bulletin announcements can be placed in the box by the "Welcome" folders in the back. Please make use of it as I need almost everything in writing or I'll forget!