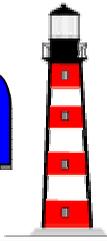


The Auburn Beacon



Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:16)

Volume 1, Issue 6

December 6, 2009



Thought to Ponder

All men desire peace, but very few desire those things that make for peace.

You Must Go to War to Find Peace

By Larry Rouse

The simplest description of a Christian is one who is an imitator of God. This transformation of the spirit of a Christian into "the image of His Son" is God's eternal plan for every man that comes to Him (Rom 8:29-30). When we honestly look at the nature of man and then that of God, we must marvel at the great power that God has used to bring about that transformation.

Just as a blacksmith hammers out the lump of metal into a useful instrument, our God uses the fires of conflict, guided by His written word and providential care to mold us into His image (James 1:2-4; Rom 5:3-5). Without this process there can be no change.

God Demands that We Know His Character

Jesus plainly showed His followers that all motives and actions on our part must be based on our understanding of how God Himself thinks and acts. How do we deal with an enemy, an angry, bitter man who has hurt us? "But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust" (Mt 5:43-45).

God Proclaims That He is a God of Peace

We should listen carefully when God describes Himself. Paul twice used peace to describe the Father's basic

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What is Peace?

Bible lexicons define the Greek word translated as "peace" as meaning: 1) a state of national tranquility 1a) exemption from the rage and havoc of war 2) peace between individuals, i.e. harmony, concord 3) security, safety, prosperity, felicity, (Continued on page 2)

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Worship10:20 AM
Evening Worship 6:00 PM

Wednesday

Bible Classes.....7:00 PM

Ask about our home Bible Study Groups!

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What kind of Peace is at the Foundation of God's Character?

When Jesus was born into the world, the angels declared His mission to bring "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men! (**Lk 2:14**)" How could Jesus bring peace between sinful men and a holy God? This peace would only come as a result of a bitter war that resulted in the shedding of Jesus' blood on the cross and the resulting crushing of Satan (**Heb 2:14-15; Rom 16:20**). Sinful men needed a savior, one that could provide a perfect sacrifice for sin and provide the great power to mold men into a life of repentance and change (**Heb 4:12-13, Phil 4:9**).

Please understand that peace with God must be placed above any other kind of peace. I must not let the threats of men or even the desire for peace with men cause me to lose peace with God. Satan has always used social relationships to entice the Christian to find "peace" with the world. "If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it *hated* you. 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" (**John 15:18-19**).

God Expects Us to Find Peace between Christians

Jesus came to set us with war with some and with peace with some. "Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. For I have come to 'set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law'; and 'a man's enemies will be those of his own household'" (**Mt 10:34-36**). When it comes to a relationship with Christians, those who have found peace with God, God demands that we remove all obstacles that would create conflict among His people (**2 Cor 13:11, James 4:13-18**).

Our War for Peace

The battle for peace begins in the heart. We must have a heart that has been crushed and then healed by God in our conversion. Only then can we become "peacemakers" (**Mt 5:3-9**). Those Christians who are not of this tender, penitent heart cannot be a part of God's peace. On the contrary, they will attack God's way of peace and be responsible for an ongoing turmoil against those who seek to serve the Lord (**James 4:1-6**). Even among the churches of God, there must be a separation between those who repent and

seek God and those who Paul described as making their "god ... *their* belly, and *whose* glory is in their shame — who set their mind on earthly things (**Phil 3:18-19, 1 Cor 11:19**). Are you teachable? If not, then you need to go to war with your own heart to find the repentance that will allow Jesus to be in control. (**Rev 3:20**).

Peace in Local Churches

As God's peacemaker, I must go to war to maintain the right relationships in a local flock. Because we are people, we will constantly be tempted to fight, look down on and discard our brethren. When I become like God, then I will put the needs of others above my own (**Phil 2:3-4**). I will also have a genuine love for every soul "for whom Christ died" (**Rom 14:15**). I will know that the only path to peace will come from that which is pure, that is, God's word received into a pure heart (**2 Tim 2:22, Jas 1:21**). The teaching of God's word must be the means by which we find peace. Please do not depend upon the schemes of men.

Local churches must have brave leaders that will confront and defeat those problems that disrupt peace. When anger and bitterness exist between Christians, then it is urgent that brave men confront this with God's solution (**Mt 5:23-24; 18:15-18, 35**). When false teaching arises, men must be quick to confront it and challenge it (**Titus 1:10-11**). If these and other problems are ignored, then rest assured they will not "go away." How many churches have been turned into a sea of turmoil because of bitterness between two people was allowed to linger and spread? "Pursue peace with all *people*, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled" (**Hebrews 12:14-15**)

We have a great need today for brave men who will go to war for peace! Rather than seeking a compromise of God's plan of salvation for peace with the denominations, we must fight for God's peace. Rather than sitting on our hands while watching a local church descend into worldliness, bitterness and pride, we must fight for God's peace. If you have found that blessed peace that brings brethren together with God and with one another, then you must fight to keep it!

"May the God of peace be with you."



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"May the God of peace be with you."



Count Your Many Blessings — Then Weigh Them

By Tim Nichols

The old suggestion that you count your blessings in the midst of difficult times is a good one. Any realistic person who will sit down and begin to number his or her blessings will soon discover that they are many. In fact, one might discover that they are so numerous that it is virtually impossible to literally "name them one by one". Even after the list is very long and we think we've made the last entry we realize that we've left something out. Job encountered this "problem" when he attempted to make the count while he was in the midst of great distress.

Would you trade your worst problems for your greatest blessings? Would you give up the promise of eternal life for the eradication of your temporary grief or pain? Would you exchange your life itself for the luxury of not having a flat tire?

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Moses weighed the affliction that he suffered with the people of God and compared it with the reward that awaited him in heaven. He saw that the value of the eternal reward far outweighed the temporary affliction. He looked "at others with their lands and gold" and thought that Christ had promised him "His wealth untold". He realized that "money cannot buy" his "reward in heaven" nor his "home on high".

By faith Moses, when he was

come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward (**Hebrews 11:24-26**).

Would you trade your worst problems for your greatest blessings? Would you give up the promise of eternal life for the eradication of your temporary grief or pain? Would you exchange your life itself for the luxury of not having a flat tire? Would you give up the love of your family in exchange for a day without disrespect or unkindness from others?

Would you trade (fill in the blank with any of your greatest blessings) _____ for the removal of (fill in the blank with any of your worst problems) _____? No, you would not. Your blessings always outweigh your problems.

For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal (**2 Corinthians 4:17, 18**).

I would seek unto God, and unto God would I commit my cause: Which doeth great things and unsearchable; marvelous things without number: Who giveth rain upon the earth, and sendeth waters upon the fields: To set up on high those that be low; that those which mourn may be exalted to safety (**Job 5:8-11**). Which doeth great things past finding out; yea, and wonders without number (**Job 9:10**).

But some pessimist might want to argue that his or her list of problems is equally long. When he compiles his list of problems he is always able to think of one more item to add. You would have a difficult time convincing him that his blessings outnumber his difficulties and it would be a lengthy debate. For every blessing he could find a problem. Both lists would, like the energizer bunny, keep going and going. Simply counting the number of items on the two lists may not be enough to bring relief to some who are dedicated to the proposition that problems are things to nurture while blessings are things to minimize.

It would be a helpful thing if we could discipline ourselves to compare our problems with our blessings and to assign some relative weight to each when compared with the other. If we would make a short list of our greatest blessings and compare them with our short list of worst problems we would soon find that our blessings far outweigh our problems. Paul was reckoning correctly and by inspiration when he measured the relative weight of the two.

For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be



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Are They (We) Christians?

By Robert Turner

Someone once asked David Lipscomb if certain digressives of the day (using mechanical instruments of music in the worship, and doing the work of the church through human societies) were Christians. Here is his reply, taken from Queries & Answers; Shepherd; p. 77-ff.

"A follower of Christ is a Christian. One must take Christ as his only Lawgiver, Ruler, Leader, and Governor; his Prophet (teacher), Priest (intercessor), and King (ruler). We must seek to think like Christ, to feel and purpose as Christ did, act as Christ acted, and in all things seek to follow Him.

The heart, the inner man, thinks, feels, purposes. Solomon says: "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." This means all the purposes and courses of life originate in and flow out from the heart. To follow Jesus, we must be like him in heart.

The highest desire of Jesus was to do the will of his Father. (Jn. 6:38; 5:30; Lu. 22:42) The fundamental, ruling desire of every child of God is to do the will of God, to subjugate his own will to the will of God in all things. The heart, then, that desires to change the law and order of God in anything is not right in the sight of God, no matter how kind and charitable he be.

A man's heart may be perfect, and yet he fall into sin. David was a man after God's own heart, yet fell into grievous sin. "The heart of Asa was perfect all his days," yet he fell into sin that brought the punishment of God upon him. It means that, while the desire

and purposes of the heart are to serve God, the fleshly appetites and passions may tempt a man into sin. There are two classes of sins —

one, the sin of the spirit, or heart, that sets aside purposely the law of God; the other, the sin of the flesh, that is drawn into sin contrary to the desires of the heart. The later sin, if it is persisted in, overcomes and perverts the spirit, or heart, and drags the man into willful sin. The sin of the heart is the presumptuous sin. It consciously and purposely sets aside the law of God and substitutes something that the person thinks will do better or is more effective in honoring God and saving men. The motive of doing good may prompt it. But it is presumption that dares to think man can improve on the appointments of God.

Men who consciously change, or modify, add to or take from, the law of God in the slightest particulars are not Christians; it is misleading to call them so. Churches that change add to, or take from the commandments of God are not churches of Christ; it is sinful to so call them. He who is not for God in such issues is against him. Be true to God."

Lipscomb hit the core of the matter when he centered upon the heart. Objectors may say a sincere man, desirous of serving God, could misunderstand his word; but such a one would continue to study, welcome assistance, and draw closer and closer to truth.



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(1 Peter 3:10-11) - "He who would love life And see good days, Let him refrain his tongue from evil, And his lips from speaking deceit. Let him turn away from evil and do good; Let him seek peace and pursue it."

News and Notes

Please pray for Jillian Petty's family as she recently lost her grandfather.

Let's remember our expectant mothers: Jana Hall, Laura Humphrey, Rachel Bradford and Joy Liu

Audio CDs of Today's Sermon will be immediately available

We will have 3 families moving in December: David and Lauren Dvorak, Tyler and Ashlyn Crawford and Matthew, Rachel and Claire Bradford. We will miss you and you will continue to be in our prayers.

There is a singing at the Broad Street church in Phoenix City at 1:30 today. For more information see Larry Rouse.

Sick

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Heather Adams (Luke Bridges' Cousin)	Rose Tate (Toni Herd's Cousin)
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