



The Voice Of Truth

A weekly publication of the

Hillcrest church of Christ

1621 Hillcrest Drive
Green Bay, WI 54313
(920) 499-5677

www.hillcrestchurchofchrist.com

January 1st, 2006

That's Just Your Interpretation!

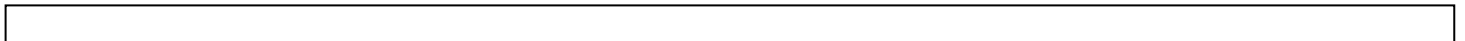
By Jimmy Pettigrew

That's just your interpretation! Think for a moment. How many times do we hear this statement when talking about God's Word with people! We talk about baptism for the remission of sins that is just your interpretation! That instrumental music in worship is sinful, that is just your interpretation, you've got your view of what the passage means and I've mine!

What do people usually mean when they say this statement: That's just your interpretation? They mean you've got your belief, your opinion, your feelings, what a certain passage means and I've got mine, and who's to say mine's wrong and yours is right? Nevertheless, the Bible portrays a completely different picture.

Every responsible individual can understand the Bible. God has given us a written revelation with the understanding that it can be correctly comprehended. This means that for every teaching, there is a meaning that God originally intended to convey. For the Bible, when understood, is a perfect unity. It yields the same message and truths to every man when it is understood. It is our task to ascertain that one correct interpretation. There's only one such interpretation to any given passage, the right one, God's view! All men are capable of understanding the Bible. If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be

of God, or whether I speak of myself (John 7:17). We could not conceive of our God being so devoid of love and consideration as to give to men a book which he must understand and whose commandments he must obey to have eternal life and then to withhold from man the faculty for understanding the Bible correctly. God made it clear we can arrive at the proper view. Jesus said, You shall know the truth . . . (John 8:32). In this statement the Lord clearly says that it is possible for us to know truth, and know that we know it. But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight saith the Lord (Jer. 31:34). We are not to be agnostic and unsure. We are to be confident and believing. Paul said, Now I beseech you brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment (1 Cor. 1:10). We are to be of one mind (2 Cor. 13:11). If we are made to see the Bible differently how can we be perfectly joined together in the same mind, one mind? Peter said, If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God (1 Peter



4:11). He who speaks as the oracles of God is unquestionably bound to speak not only the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27), but also only that which is authorized by God's Word. These things we must speak (Titus 2:15)! Paul said, rightly divide (handle aright) the word of truth (2 Tim. 2:15). Notice that all these passages are based upon the preconception that individuals can, with proper study and rational reasoning, arrive at the conclusions that God intended to deliver.

So, there's NO such thing as my interpretation and your interpretation! There is only God's meaning, and with diligent, logical study we can arrive at the truth on any subject that is vital to our spiritual well-being. This is possible when all proposing to serve the Christ confined their speaking to the oracles of God (1 Peter 4:11), recognizing only the Word as authority (2 Tim. 3:16-17), be about the business of studying and searching God's book (Acts 17:11; 1 Thess. 5:21). We need to study the Bible with the determination to know what it teaches, making an honest search to determine if we really do have the truth. What is God's meaning of this passage, what is God saying? When we find truth, it should be accepted and obeyed! We must cautiously refrain from misinterpreting and misusing Scripture (2 Cor. 4:2; 2 Peter 3:16). We must take heed how we hear (Luke 8:18), and make certain our hearts are genuinely receptive to the truth (Luke 8:15). The Bible must be our standard of righteousness; any other standard is false (Gal. 1:6-8). Unless we refrain from elevating human opinion above the faith, the Gospel, we will never see God's meaning! Now these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes; that in us ye might learn not (to go) beyond the things which are written (1 Cor. 4:6).

So, there is no such thing as your interpretation and my interpretation! We can be certain of our ability to come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Tim. 2:3-4).

"Careless Soul, Why will you Linger?"

A. C. Grider

We are living in a time when people could "care less" for spiritual matters. Hence the title which stands at the head of this article. In this regard, times have been better in the past. But we seem to have reached a new low in getting response to our efforts. I wonder if times will ever be any better along this line.

The work of the preacher grows more difficult and frustrations become greater as time goes on. Go out and talk to a man whose soul we would like to see saved and invite him to services. He shakes it off with, "I ain't a making you no promises." He seems to think he owes the preacher a promise. When (and if) he finally does come, it likely will be a "one time only" thing, and even then he smirkingly acts like he has done us a big favor by coming. Or try to talk to him on the spot about the salvation of his soul and he is much too busy to listen. Or else he will shrug it off as if something else was far more important.

We go to members of the church who seldom attend services and plead with them to be more faithful. They will shake it off with, "I know I am not coming as I should. I know I should come." These so-called Christians seem to think they owe the preacher this much of a concession. When (and if) they do come as result of the exhortation, it will likely be a "one time only" thing and again they go back to being unfaithful. So it is necessary to try, try again.

What can we do; what can we say to get sinners, both in the church and out, to see that it is not for our sake nor even for Jesus' sake that we want them to obey the gospel? Why can't they see it is for their own good and for the sake of their own soul that we plead with them? I am reminded of a story the late N.B. Hardeman used to tell. He had engaged in a very heated discussion with a cantankerous old sinner, but to no avail. The argument waxed hot and Hardeman became impatient. Hardeman later said, "I thought once I would tell him to go to hell. But, on second thought, I knew he would go anyway so I didn't tell him." That is a kind of humorous thing and in a way seems to be a little harsh. But in all seriousness, it might open some eyes if some people were bluntly told to go to torment. At any rate, alien sinners and erring Christians many times are "careless souls" and they continue to "linger." I don't know anything to do or anything the Lord wants us to do but keep trying to get them to do what they must do to be saved.

Truth Magazine, XX:2, p. 12-13
January 8, 1976