



The Voice Of Truth

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Hillcrest church of Christ

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Charges to Christians

By Jimmy Pettigrew

It is a great privilege to be a member of the church of our Lord. The one that He gave His life for, as brought out in Acts 20:28, and to have the precious promises that come to us from Him, in His Divine and Holy Word. To know that we can have life eternal, if we obey those things that He has given us through the inspired Volume.

May we never, my brethren, grow tired of the Scriptures that we have heard in years past, that have been taught to us by those who have loved and defended the truth. May we still understand that the Bible is the message of God that we are the light of the world, which we are a city that is set on a hill and cannot be hid. We need to show what a Christian is to this world. With this in mind, let us look at some charges to Christians.

(1) ... standfast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong (1 Corinthians 16:13). Paul exhorts the Corinthians to stand fast. Meaning, stand fast in the truth (John 17:17), God's Word (Psalms 119:9), the New Testament (2 Corinthians 3:6), the gospel of Christ (Romans 1:16), the doctrine or the teaching of Christ (2 John 9). This is the urgency needed by all saints! We must prove our worth as a soldier of Christ and fight the spiritual warfare the Christians must wage. My brethren, the New Testament church was aggressive. It

was, and is, the pillar and ground of the truth (1 Timothy 3:15). It waged a relentless warfare against every form of evil. Christ, its head, was manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8). No truce or terms can be made with the enemy, and we must fight the good fight of faith (1 Timothy 6:12). Yet, there are some in and many out of the church that would not know the truth if they met it in the middle of the street. They do not have sufficient convictions to argue about anything. In order for the church to stand, for truth to be seen and heard by all, we must be a people, of all people, who are militant. A vigorous and determined attack on the enemy of righteousness must be launched all along the line at all times. Stand fast in the faith, always be eager to defend (1 Peter 3:15) and contend (Jude 3). Stand for the things which Christ stood for, stand for the things which Christ died for, stand and ask for the old paths (Jeremiah 6:16).

(2) Abstain from every form of evil (1 Thessalonians 5:22). When one has learned what is good or true, and what is evil or false, he should hold fast the truth and abstain from the evil. In First Timothy 6:11-12, follow a discourse on a number of evils and the disastrous results that come upon those that follow such things. Paul addresses Timothy as a

man of God, indicating that he is one who is committed to God in this life. In view of the evils just mentioned (1 Timothy 6), Paul urges Timothy to flee these things (vs. 11). There are times when running is not cowardly, but wise. It is absurdity, foolishness and madness, to remain in the presence of temptation needlessly. It is not wisdom to deliberately place one's soul in jeopardy. When Joseph was approached by the wife of Potiphar for the purpose of fornication, Joseph fled the scene completely. We cannot always avoid temptations, but we do not have to remain in their presence. Do not enter the path of the wicked, And do not walk in the way of evil. Avoid it, do not travel on it, Turn away from it and pass on (Proverbs 4:14-15).

(3) ... Be ye yourselves also holy in all manner of living (1 Peter 1:15). We are encouraged to live lives of complete dedication to God. As the song we sing, we need to:

***Take time to be Holy, speak oft with thy Lord;
Abide in Him always, And feed on His word.***

Are we taking time to be holy when we want worship services shortened? Or, when we want the sermon not to be more than twenty minutes? We want the prayers short, the songs few. What's the big hurry? Are we in a hurry to visit the sick and erring after services? No, we want to go to a restaurant and eat a delicious meal, watch TV or whatever we desire. If the Lord's Supper is served first, some brethren will partake of it and leave on a trip the minute after they partake! Is this taking time to be holy, or is this taking time for our own desires? We need forget the cares of the world and take time to be holy! We should study God's word and pray every day.

Do you love the Father? Do your actions show that you do? This love for God is not simply an emotion. It is a disposition that seeks the glory of God. The truth of God has been placed in the care of those who love the Lord. It is an awesome responsibility, so let us handle it aright, love it, obey, live it and stand fast for it!

THE STRANGER

(Author unknown)

Few months before I was born, my dad met a stranger who was new to our small Tennessee town. From the beginning Dad was fascinated with this enchanting newcomer, and soon invited him to live with our family. The stranger was quickly accepted and was around to welcome me into the world a few months later. As I grew up I never questioned his place in our family. Mom taught me to love the Word of God. Dad taught me to obey it. But the stranger was our storyteller. He could weave the most fascinating tales. Adventures, mysteries and comedies were daily conversations. He could hold family spellbound for hours each evening. He was like a friend to the whole family. He took Dad, Bill and me to our first major league baseball game. He was always encouraging us to see the movies and he even made arrangements to introduce us to several movie stars. The stranger was an incessant talker. Dad didn't seem to mind, but sometimes Mom would quietly get up - while the rest of us were enthralled with one of his stories of faraway places - and go to her room, read her Bible and pray. I wonder now if she ever prayed that the stranger would leave. You see, my Dad ruled our household with certain moral convictions. But this stranger never felt an obligation to honor them. Profanity, for example, was not allowed in our house - not from us, from our friends, or adults. Our longtime visitor, however, used occasional four-letter words that burned my ears and made Dad squirm. To my knowledge the stranger was never confronted. My Dad was a teetotaler who didn't permit alcohol in his home - not even for cooking. But the stranger felt he needed exposure and enlightened us to other ways of life. He offered us beer and other alcoholic beverages. He made cigarettes look tasty, cigars manly, and pipes distinguished. He talked freely (too much too freely) about sex. His comments were sometimes blatant, sometimes suggestive, and generally embarrassing. I know now that my early concepts of the man/woman relationship were influence by the stranger. As I look back, I believe it was by the grace of God that the stranger did not influence us more. Time after time he opposed the values of my parents. Yet he was seldom rebuked and never asked to leave. More than thirty years have passed since the stranger moved in with the young family on Morningside Drive. But if I were to walk into my parent's den today, you would still see him sitting over in a corner, waiting for someone to listen to him talk and watch him draw his pictures. His name? We always called him TV.