



The Voice of Truth

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Do You Remember Thy Creator?

By Jimmy Pettigrew

“Remember also thy Creator in the days of thy youth, before the evil days come, and the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them” (**Ecc1, 12:1**). We would think that everyone would remember the Creator. But, sadly, for many of today’s youth this is not the case. Many of today’s youth have very little hope pursuing the course of righteousness. In an age of television addiction, materialism, and recreationalism we allow our youth to learn at an early age not to remember the Creator each day, but to do what pleases self. It’s sad that the youth are taught by our actions that these things are to take precedence over God. Then the Creator sounds strange to them in adulthood.

We must teach our youth about the Great Creator!!! “Train up a child in the way he should go, And even when he is old he will not depart from it” (**Prov. 22:6**). “...bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (**Eph. 6:4**).

There is nothing so despicable as to see parents who abuse a child by severe beating or torture, unless it is a parent who fails to instill within his child the love of God and the joy of service in Christianity.

There is nothing sadder than the story of a careless parent who causes a child to be burned, unless it is an adult who carelessly fails to prepare a son or daughter for eternity.

The time for remembering God is in the days of our youth. Worship services and Bible studies are not times set aside for adults to give remembrance only, but the youth also!

The youth should know that worship is a time that all should give praise, them included! Bible study is a time for both youth and adults to be learning! Therefore, where are our youth on Sunday and Wednesday? Maybe recreational time conflicted with the time of worship and Bible study. Or, maybe they’re too tired to come. Brethren, we don’t use these excuses to keep our kids home from school. What an ungodly imbalance! Or, maybe they learned from their parents that you don’t have to come to every service. Parents, if they see you attending worship every time an opportunity arises, they will learn from your example. What’s the answer?

If our children do not desire to go to services, do we make them? Some say, if you make your children go to services, they will rebel against the church. This is a fool hearted statement, if I ever heard one. We make them go to school, and I never saw one rebel against school. My mother used to make me take baths for years, and I still take baths! We are to teach them what is good for them. Parents have a great responsibility to help their children for eternity.

Does absence by choice reveal anything about ones interests, priorities, values, etc.? Absolutely! Also, you automatically taught that it’s not important to study God’s word; you told the town that the church is not important! Their problem is not wanting to retain God in

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their knowledge, because God gets in the way of their plans to live for self. So, they willfully forget God.

Let us all remember thy Creator!!!

Restoring First Century Christianity Today

By Jonathan L. Perz

Throughout time, man has departed from God's ways. The Israelites, God's people of old, continually departed from God's teachings and had to repent and restore God's ways. They faced judgment after judgment for perverting the ways of God, yet they never learned. **Romans 15:4** teaches us that these things were written "for our learning." **1 Corinthians 10:11** teaches us that they were written "for our admonition." Therefore, we must learn from their errors and stand fast in the truth of God's word.

The Israelites are not the only people who ever departed from the truth. Even among first century churches, apostasy ran rampant. In **Galatians 1:6-9**, we read of Paul's amazement that the churches in Galatia had accepted a perverted gospel so soon after acknowledging the truth. The New Testament is filled with warning after warning that apostasy will take place and God's ways will be departed from. Consider the following passages: **1 Tim. 4:1-3; 2 Tim. 3:1-5; 4:1-5; 2 Pet. 2:1-2; Jude 3-4; Rev. 2:4-5**. In every instance of apostasy, repentance was commanded. Hence, only a fool would deny the possibility of apostasy today!

The Need For Restoration

In **Jeremiah 6:16**, the great prophet of God prophesied, "Thus says the LORD: 'Stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where the good way is, and walk in it; then you will find rest for your souls. But they said, 'We will not walk in it.'"

Now more than ever, there is a need to restore the "old paths" of Christianity where the "good way" is. A quick look at today's religious world reveals complete mayhem. It is difficult to find two churches in one city that teach the same thing. It is even more difficult to find a church that is like the church described in the first century. When these circumstances exist, something has gone terribly wrong.

Is this sectarian religious world, with all its different names, creeds, doctrines, teachings, ministries, and ideas what the Lord prayed for in **John 17**? I think not! Are those proclaiming Christianity today fulfilling what Paul spoke of in **Ephesians 4:3** where he wrote, "endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace?" Definitely not! We must ask ourselves, "Is Christ divided?" just as Paul asked the Corinthians (**1 Cor. 1:13**). Obviously, our answer must be, "Of course not!" Yet, judging from the appearance of today's "Christian" world, you cannot tell. Why? Simply stated, everyone has gone his own way, and turned crooked the straight paths of the Lord!

The Plight Of First Century Christianity

In the majority of "Christendom," first century Christianity has been abandoned today! Sure, the core of the Gospel—the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ—remains intact. It is the plan of salvation, the apostle's doctrine, the pattern of the first century church, among other things, that have suffered perversion. Unfortunately, many souls have honestly and sincerely been deceived by such perversions.

Through time, many different people have taught various notions of Christianity. Some teachers have tried to make the word of God too simple. Some have made it too difficult. Some felt that our worship to God required innovation and modernization, thus they changed it. Some obviously believed the organization of the first century church was not

good enough, so they tried to make it better. Some believed that the Gospel of Jesus Christ was irrelevant to today's modern society, so they adjusted it to make it "relevant." The turns, twists, and forks in what is supposed to be the "straight and narrow path" to salvation are too many to mention and were definitely not put there by God. Some happened long ago and carried through to today. The rest are added day by day. Overall, "Christianity" has changed without God's permission. God's perfect Way has been deemed imperfect. That is why we must repent and seek to restore first century Christianity today!

How Do We Restore First Century Christianity Today?

First, we must find the pure seed. The Bible has likened the Word of God unto a seed—an incorruptible seed (**1 Pet. 1:23**). This seed must be planted in the hearts of men. If the soil is right, it will grow and bear fruit. If the soil is poor, it will not bear fruit (consider the parable of the sower—**Matt. 13:24ff**). We know that a seed will bear fruit after its' own kind. The pure seed of God's word will produce true Christians and nothing else. What happens when the seed is perverted, warped, manipulated, and changed? The result is what we have today: hundreds of different flavors of Christianity. We have division, sectarianism and denominationalism! This is why we must get back into our Bibles and imitate the first century church in doctrine, worship, organization, labors, and purity (**1 Thess. 2:14**). We must find the pure seed and begin planting it. Only then, will we reap pure Christianity!

Second, we must learn to "rightly divide the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15). This must be a diligent effort. So many today, depend upon the "clergy" to do the studying and interpreting for them. This is a dangerous practice to say the least. The Lord commanded "we work out our own salvation with fear and trembling" (**Phil. 2:12**). Knowing we all will give answer for ourselves on the Day of Judgment, we cannot leave our salvation in the hands of someone else. We must learn to study God's word for ourselves, test the spirits, and prove all things (**Acts 17:11; 1 John 4:1; 1 Thess. 5:21**). When we do this, "we are workers that need not be ashamed." But when we trust another to do our studying for us, we could likely be the "blind following the blind" (**Luke 6:39**). That is why we must all learn as individuals to study our Bibles for ourselves and rightly divide the word of truth.

Third, we must seek Bible authority (a book, chapter and verse) for all that we say and do. The apostle wrote in **Colossians 3:17**, "and whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord..." We can know by faith, which comes by hearing the word of God (**Rom. 10:17**), that if the Lord Jesus commanded us to do it, we must do it. God gave Him all authority (**Matt. 28:18**). We can also know by faith, that if the apostles did something or commanded us to do something, we can and must do it. The Lord gave the apostles authority (**Matt. 16:19; 2 Cor. 10:8**). Thus, we have our means of establishing authority for what we do. If we have a direct command, an approved apostolic example or we can necessarily infer that it was a practice of the first century Christians, we can know by faith it is acceptable for us to do. To do anything else is to act without the Lord's authority and thereby sin. It is really that simple! We must seek God's approval for all that we say and do (**Col. 3:17**).

Fourth, we must reestablish the pattern for the church set forth in the New Testament. The Bible says, in **2 Timothy 1:13**, "Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus." The work, worship, and organization of some churches has become secular and carnal in nature. Instead of saving souls, churches are feeding bellies. Instead of coming together to worship God, churches come together for entertainment and socialization. Instead of autonomous local congregations overseen by a plurality of qualified elders, churches have become institutionalized conglomerates led by one man oftentimes not qualified to be an elder or many men holding titles and positions nowhere designated in scripture. We must get back to the arrangement the Lord has designated for a local church, and accept no substitutes.

Finally, we must stand fast in the truth and never ever compromise it. It is written in **2 Thessalonians 2:15**, “Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle.” God’s word offers no compromise because compromise is the door to apostasy. Compromise of truth involves giving into something other than truth, and inevitably departing from God’s word. This is why “Christianity” is in the mess that it is in today. Men have not only opened the door for compromise, they let it swing freely both ways. Sadly, all we have left to show for it is division and more division. Instead of restoration, people call for “unity in diversity” and “ecumenism,” neither of which are pleasing to God. This is why we must stand firm in the truth and never compromise it.

In Conclusion...

Let us all demand the truth of God’s word, the whole truth of God’s word, and accept nothing but the truth of God’s word. If the church you are part of does not resemble the church you can read of in the pages of the New Testament in every way, shape and form—demand restoration! If they “will not walk in the old paths” that Jeremiah wrote of in **Jeremiah 6:16**, then find a group who will. There is indeed a great need to restore first century Christianity today. This is the plea of the church of Christ that meets on Hillcrest Drive. We hope you will make it your plea too!

People Are Like Potatoes

Some people are very bossy and like to tell everyone what to do, but they don’t want to soil their own hands. They are called **“Dick Tators.”**

Some people never seem motivated to participate, but are content to watch while others do. They are called **“Speck Tators.”**

Some people never do anything to help, but are gifted at finding fault with the way others do things. They are called **“Comment Tators.”**

Some people are always looking to cause problems. They ask others to agree with them when they state that it is too hot or too cold, too sour or too sweet, too much or too little. They are called **“Aggie Tators.”**

There are those who always say they will, but somehow, they never get around to doing anything. They are called **“Hezzie Tators.”**

Some people put on a front and act like someone they are not. They are called **“Emma Tators.”**

Then, there are those who live what they talk. They’re always prepared to stop what they’re doing to lend a hand to others. They bring real sunshine into the lives of others. You might call them **“Sweet Tators.”**

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear and Learn - Rom. 10:17 m. 10:9-10 ; 1 Pet. 3:21 ; John 6:45; 17:3

Believe - Heb. 11:6; John 6:29; 8:24

Repent - Luke 13:3; Acts 3:19; 17:30

Confess the Lord - Matt. 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Pet. 3:21

Be Baptized - Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16; Gal. 3:26-27

Continue in the Apostles' Teaching - Acts 2:42; 2 Tim. 3:14-17