



The Voice of Truth

A weekly publication of the
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December 7, 2008

How To Reach The Father By Jimmy Pettigrew

“Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (**John 14:1-6**).

Jesus strives to elevate man's thinking from this earth to heaven. Jesus had been with the disciples on earth for some time, but was about to go to heaven and leave them on earth to do the work. It was vital that they, as well as all people, put their focus upon heaven as home and not earth (**Colossians 3:1-3**); have their center of attention upon “a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God” (**Hebrews 11:10**), “and to be with Christ; which is far better” (**Philippians 1:23**).

Even though Jesus would leave them on the earth for a time, He promises to return for them in order that they might live with Him in heaven eternally. Then Thomas asked the question, “Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?” The question of how to get to man's greatest goal should be asked by all men. Jesus responds to Thomas' question saying, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” Jesus declared that He is the way to the Father, and He is the only way (**Acts 4:12**)! Jesus is the door (**John 10:9**); He is our hope (**1 Timothy 1:1**); our deliverer (**Romans 11:26**); the captain of our salvation (**Hebrews 2:10**).

To reach the Father we must follow Jesus as the way! Jesus is the only access to the Father (**Romans 5:2; Ephesians 2:18**). This access to the Father through Christ has a limitation. It must be by the truth! Not everything is true (**1 John 4:1**). Jesus is the truth (**John 14:6**)! Jesus is the way by His teaching (**John 6:68**). Truth is the words of Christ (**John 1:14**). He brought grace and truth (**John 1:17**). This truth will decide where we spend eternity (**Revelation 20:12ff**). Truth will make us free from sin (**John 8:31-32**). It will judge us on the last day (**John 12:48**). Obedience to the truth will give us eternal life (**James 1:21-22**). This is the only truth (**Galatians 1:6-9**); the “one faith” (**Ephesians 4:4**); “the faith” (**Jude 3**). No other! “Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine (teaching ASV) of Christ, hath not God” (**2 John 1:9**).

To reach the Father we must follow Jesus. Jesus not only claimed to be the way, the truth, but He said “I am the life” (**John 14:6**). There is no life without the connection with the life source. No other way! Christ is the great source from whence cometh eternal life (**Romans 6:23; John 11:25**). Jesus “hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” (**2 Timothy 1:10**). To have life we must come to Him (**John 5:40**). He is the only way. He is the bread of God from Heaven that gives spiritual life (**John**

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6:33). Christianity provides the greatest way to live and the greatest way to prepare for death.

The only way to reach the Father is to follow Christ as the way, the truth and the life. Jesus is not merely a way, a truth or a life. He is exclusively the way, the truth and the life. There is no other way, there is no other source of the truth that saves, and there is no other source of eternal life. Salvation is in Christ (**2 Timothy 2:10**). So, we must follow in His steps (**1 Peter 2:21**), and He will lead us to the Father. The way of man is not himself (**Jeremiah 10:23**). “We have turned everyone to his own way” (**Isaiah 53:6**). The way which seemeth right unto a man has its end in the way of death (**Proverbs 16:25**). Therefore, Jesus came as the way, the living way, showing the way, providing and establishing the way of salvation. How may one get into Christ to reach the Father? One must believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God (**John 8:24**); Repent of your sins (**Luke 13:3**); Confess that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God (**Acts 8:37**); be baptized for the remission of sins (**Acts 2:38**), baptized into Christ (**Galatians 3:27**); live faithfully on to Him (**Revelation 2:10**), and He has promised a home in heaven (**John 14:2-3**).

May we do all that we can to follow Christ, so that we will inherit eternity!

It Is Better To Give

By Jonathan L. Perz

Have you ever considered the ability to give as a blessing? Most think negatively about giving, rather than trying to appreciate the joy of giving. Paul tells us that Jesus said, “It is better to give than it is to receive” (**Acts 20:35**). What do these words mean to you? Perhaps some probing questions would serve to help us examine ourselves (**2 Corinthians 13:5**).

Is laying by in store on the first day of the week a blessing or a burden to you? It is not merely an obligation. It is a privilege. It should be a treat to us. It should make us cheerful. Is it not a blessing to be prosperous? Paul says, “give as you have prospered” (**1 Corinthians 16:1-2**). Hence, count it not a burden, but a joy to be able to give back to Him who gives to us so abundantly. Are you the cheerful giver God loves (**2 Corinthians 9:7**)?

Do you work to receive or do you work to give? An interesting question indeed. Paul said, “Let him who stole, steal no longer, but let him labor with his hands that he may have something to give him who has need” (**Ephesians 4:28**). Have you considered your ability to earn an income as an opportunity to give to others? Our culture teaches us that if you want more—you must work more and earn more. While this is true literally, it defies the Biblical concept of contentment (**1 Timothy 6:6**). Worse yet is that even if you do not have the money on hand to buy it, you can charge it to a credit card. This not only makes it more difficult for you in the long run (**1 Timothy 6:7-10**), it renders you unable to give, except to cover your debts, for some time to come. Thus, instead of glorifying God with your riches and laying up treasures in heaven, you have gratified yourself and laid up debts on earth. If you think that you work to receive, a renewal of the spirit of your mind is in order (**Ephesians 4:20-24**).

Where is your bank account? Your first impulse might have accurately assessed your mindset. Jesus said, “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (**Matthew 6:19-21**). If you initially thought of some financial institution on earth, perhaps that is where your heart is also—even if your first answer was immediately corrected with the “right answer.” Laying up your treasures in heaven implies a “give” mindset, whereas storing up for yourselves treasures

on earth implies a “receive” mindset. Jesus told the rich young ruler to go and sell what he had and give to the poor, then he would have treasure in heaven (cf. **Matthew 19:21**). We must conform our first thoughts to be like God’s thoughts if we are to appreciate the true joy of giving.

Do you know what it is to give beyond your ability? This is not to speak of the self-inflicted sorrow that results from spending beyond our ability. Paul speaks of those who gave, not only according to their ability, but beyond their ability—and they did so joyfully. Not only did they do this, they begged Paul to accept their liberal gift for the saints in Judea. Paul writes, “Moreover brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed upon the churches of Macedonia: that in a great trial of affliction that abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality. For I bear witness that according to their ability, yes, and beyond their ability, they were freely willing, imploring us with much urgency that we would receive the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. And not only as we had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God” (**2 Corinthians 8:1-5**). This beautiful account was spurred by a sacrificial spirit that found joy in giving and serving others. The widow who gave who her whole livelihood demonstrated this same spirit. Jesus said of her, “Assuredly I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all those who had given to the treasury; for they all put in out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all that she had, her whole livelihood” (**Mark 12:41-44**). So, giving is not a privilege reserved for the rich, but a blessing bestowed upon all—an even greater blessing than receiving.

Is your giving characteristic of your faith? There is a direct correlation between the two. Unfortunately, televangelists have abused this correlation to their own profit (God will be their judge). Nevertheless, their covetousness is couched in a Biblical principal. It takes faith to give. It takes faith to sacrifice. It takes faith to give of yourself—with only the promise of a blessing in return—especially when such blessing inherently requires trial, adversity, suffering, pain and further sacrifice—first and foremost—and blessing later. It takes faith to find joy in such endeavors. The Lord told His disciples, “And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name’s sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life” (**Matthew 19:29**). What we give demonstrates the level of faith we have in the Lord to fulfill His promises (cf. **2 Corinthians 9:6-15**). Indeed, we say our own lives are forfeit for the Lord (**Luke 14:26, 33**), but do our actions reflect our words? Do our works typify our faith? This does not imply that we should abandon our families, lay everything we have in the collection plate, and wander this world in an ascetic existence. He gives us freely all things to enjoy (**1 Timothy 6:17**). Nevertheless, the true joy of receiving blessings is found only in the ability to give fully and freely. The faithless cannot appreciate these truths.

Let us remember, whatever a man sows, that will he also reap (**Galatians 6:7**). If we sow abundantly, we shall reap abundantly (**2 Corinthians 9:6**). The implication can also be made that if we sow begrudgingly, our reward will be bitterness and resentment. If we sow joyfully, our reward will be blessings and true prosperity.

Do you truly appreciate the words of our Lord, “It is better to give than it is to receive” (**Acts 20:35**)?

What If It's Not In the Scriptures?

By David J. Riggs

On several occasions, after I had stated that a certain religious belief or practice was not in the Scriptures, I received the reply, "Does that make it wrong?" Let me affirm plainly and emphatically in words which cannot be misunderstood that **it most certainly does make it**

wrong! When one believes or practices something in religion which is not in the Scriptures, all of the following divine principles immediately apply:

1. It is not a good work - **2 Tim. 3:16-17**
2. It does not pertain to life and godliness - **2 Pet. 1:3**
3. It causes one to not have God - **2 John 9**
4. It is not authorized by Christ - **Col. 3:17**
5. It cannot be done by faith - **2 Cor. 5:7; Rom. 10:17; 14:23**
6. It is going beyond what is written - **1 Cor. 4:6**
7. It is not as the oracles of God - **1 Pet. 4:11**
8. It is not according to the pattern - **Heb. 8:5**
9. It does not pertain to the seed of the kingdom - **Luke 8:11; Matt. 13:18-19**
10. It is not of righteousness - **Rom. 1:16-17; 10:1-4**
11. It is of "no such commandment" - **Acts 15:24**
12. It is iniquity - **Matt. 7:22-23**
13. It is of men - **Matt. 21:25; 15:9**
14. It is not of truth - **John 4:24**
15. It is another gospel - **Gal. 1:6-9**
16. It is adding to the Word of God - **Rev. 22:18-19; Deut. 4:2; Prov. 30:5-6**

In effort to justify their practice, people often argue, "The Bible doesn't say not to." The Bible doesn't need to condemn a practice to make it sinful and wrong. It is wrong when it is not in the Scriptures for it violates the above principles. Similarly, many use the time worn reply, "Isn't our practice a good work; look at the good we're doing." If it's not in the Scriptures, if cannot be a good work because, again, it is condemned by the above principles.

What should we say, therefore, about the many things which are practiced in religions today that are not in the Scriptures? For example, what about baptizing infants, sprinkling for baptism, christening, calling a man Reverend, instrumental music in worship, taking money out of the church treasury and sending it to human institutions, etc.? Aren't all of the above sixteen principles violated by such additions?

How can people claim to be followers of Christ when they have no respect whatsoever for the things which Christ said? How can they claim love and respect for Christ when they continue to do things in religion which have been introduced solely by man? Spending time and effort to learn the Word of Christ and continuing steadfastly therein, demonstrates genuine love and respect for Christ. Similarly, a rejection of all traditions and doctrines of men confirms true love and respect for Christ. Those who are doing things not authorized by Christ have no love and respect for Him.

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**