



The Voice of Truth

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Are You Breaking Your Vows?

By Jimmy Pettigrew

There is a strange, peculiar and bewildering disease that is spreading among God's children today! It strikes Sunday afternoon and is cured by Thursday morning. This disease is called "LUKE WARM-NESS". This lukewarmness makes my Lord sick (**Revelation 3:16**).

We in the Lord's church are not totally committed to the Lord. Brethren, we become married to Christ when we obey the gospel. It is then that we become a part of His bride, the church (**Romans 7:4; 2 Corinthians 11:2**). We then make solemn marriage vows, and they must not be broken. If we neglect these vows for just a moment we deny the Lord and "*If we deny him, he also will deny us,*" **2 Timothy 2:12**.

As Christians, we have solemnly promised the Lord that we will ever be faithful in all our duties as a part of the bride - we must not break these vows. But, sadly many of my brethren and sisters who would not think of breaking the vows they made to their earthly companions think very little of breaking the vows they made when they became married to Christ. Many, after making vows to the Lord, break them! HOW?

1. By forsaking the assembly (**Hebrews 10:25**).
2. By loving the things of this world (**1 John 2:15-17**).
3. By not seeking and saving the lost (**Matthew 28:18-20**).
4. By not putting the Kingdom of God first (**Matthew 6:33**).
5. By not adding to your faith (**2 Peter 1:5-11**).
6. By burying thy talent (**Matthew 25:14-30**).
7. By not redeeming the time (**Ephesians 5:15-16**).
8. By not giving attendance to reading, meditating, study (**1 Timothy 4:13-15; 2 Timothy 2:15**).
9. By not having a saving influence (**Matthew 5:14-16**).
10. By not presenting our bodies a living sacrifice, holy to God (**Romans 12:1**).

I know that you could think of many more ways we break our vows to our Lord. Have you faithfully kept your vows? Have you been true to the Great Bridegroom? May I implore you to live true to your Lord. Christ died for us; let us serve him faithfully until the end (**Revelation 2:10**).

"An Upset Adulteress"

By Jarrod Jacobs

According to a Jacksonville, FL newspaper, Rebecca Hancock (age 49) is upset because her "church" is going to publicly expose her sin of adultery before the church on January 4 if she doesn't repent. [**Editor's Note:** I understand this to mean they are going to withdraw from her as the Bible teaches. This is a rarity among brethren unfortunately, and definitely something hardly ever seen in the denominational world to which she belongs.] This divorced woman claims to have a boyfriend that she is "involved with", and this has become a problem for her "church" because those folks recognize the sin of adultery, even if she

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refuses to recognize it. In her words: "I am a Christian, and that will never change. My relationship with Jesus has to do with me and Jesus, and he knows my heart." The news said she has recently started attending yet another "church," and intends to tell those folks she is no longer a member with them. (**Source:** www.news4jax.com/news/18286355/detail.html)

Yes, this is one upset adulteress! She did not like the fact that her sins were exposed, and so her answer is to claim that she and Jesus are OK, and that she will move on to another "church" that will accept her. Is this not the way of so many? Rather than confess the sin and repent out of concern for one's soul and the influence they are having on others, folks will run away from those pointing out error, and look for the "accepting" folks, who will accept them in their error.

Sadly, this is nothing new. When Peter saw the Lord one time, he begged the Lord leave him (**Lk. 5:8**). On another occasion, when Jesus spoke words the people did not like, "*many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him*" (**Jn. 6:66**). A third example of this behavior was when the Gadarenes begged Jesus to leave them after He had cast out Legion and sent the swine into the sea (**Matt. 8:34**). In each case, instead of the sinners submitting to Christ and being forgiven, they rejected the One who had the cure for sin. This is like the upset adulteress in Jacksonville. She would stop committing adultery and be right with God. Instead, she takes her "plight" to the public media and pleads for sympathy from the public.

According to the news source, this divorced woman claims that she and Jesus are in a right relationship. Yet, in the Bible I read, in both Old and New Testaments, God has never condoned sexual sin. "*Thou shalt not commit adultery*" are the words of **Exodus 20:14**. The New Testament says the same thing (**Rom. 13:9; I Cor. 6:18**). For that matter, we do not know the reason for her divorce, but if this woman did not divorce for the reason of fornication, then she has just added sin to sin (**Matt. 5:32, 19:9**). For these reasons, why would any church not withdraw from her (**II Thess. 3:6-7, 14-15; I Cor. 5; etc.**)?

The article concludes by saying that the woman is attending another church. This says that there is a church around who will accept an adulteress in that relationship. How tragic! Here is a group of folks claiming to follow the Lord, and yet they are in fellowship with some who are not in fellowship with God!

The point? Let this be a lesson to us. Those in sin in this world are becoming bolder and bolder, just like in days gone by (**Jer. 6:15**). She showed no remorse for her sin and her adultery. This woman was upset because the church took issue with her sin! Her justification of, "I am a Christian and that will never change", and that Jesus "knows my heart", just shows to what extent she is denying reality. First, I would deny she is a Christian as the New Testament describes (**Acts 2:38, 11:26**), but even if she was, does this justify committing sin? It didn't in the New Testament (**Rom. 6:1-2; Heb. 3:12-13; I Pet. 2:11**). Why do folks think it will justify sin today?

Too, how many others today use this same kind of rationale to continue in their sins? It is sad, but it is nonetheless true that many folks often fight harder to stay in sin than they will fight to get out of sin. This woman in Jacksonville, FL is a prime example. She'd rather leave the church she was a member of, and find another who will accept her in her adultery than to repent and please God.

Let us live the truth of the Bible and follow God's will concerning marriage (**Heb. 13:4; Matt. 19:4-6**). Let us be that right example, and teach our children to follow and respect the Lord's plan for marriage as well (**Eph. 6:4**). Let us not condone sin in any form (**I Thess. 5:21-22**). Too, as a church, let us not condone sin in the ranks, whether it is sexual sin, or sin in whatever form. The world is not growing closer to God!

My Way or the Highway

By Jonathan L. Perz

It is certain, at some point in our lives, we have heard or even used the phrase, “My way or the highway.” This saying, when used without malice, is used to remind a subordinate to do things exactly as they are told. Interestingly enough, this phrase can be used to draw some spiritual lessons.

Many among those professing Christianity today proclaim their ways better than God’s ways. Often, it is nothing so bold as personally telling God that their ways are better. It is generally seen in subtle acts of rebellion against the word of God. Of course, we would have to reiterate our saying a bit to make it represent what is truthfully being professed (e.g., “My ways are the high ways!” or “My ways are better than the high ways!”); nevertheless, the outcome constitutes nothing more than the transgression of God’s word (**1 John 3:4**).

Through Isaiah the prophet, God says, “‘For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are My ways your ways,’ says the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts” (**Isa. 55:8-9**). Indeed, as Israel needed this rebuke then, many also need it today!

For example, the Lord said, “call no man father” (**Matt. 23:9**), obviously speaking in a spiritual sense. However, the Catholic and Episcopalian churches call their spiritual leaders “father.” How is this justified? They have deemed their ways as the high ways, and even better than the “high ways” of God, by authorizing and practicing something in direct contradiction to the edict of our Lord.

Lest this be deemed overly simplistic or trivial, as some are wont to say, the Catholic church has placed a hierarchy of intercessors between God and man when there is only One—Christ (**1 Tim. 2:5**). They have a Pope, who is supposed to sit in the seat of Peter and be the Vicar of Christ on earth. Indeed, no such institution is found in scripture. Furthermore, we see another form of intercession in the Catholic practice of confession, which has sinners confess their sins to a priest, who is supposed to absolve them of sin, rather than directly to God. The Bible says, “confess your faults one to another” (**Jas. 5:16**) and “If we confess our sins, He (God) is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (**1 John 1:9**). Nowhere is the Catholic practice and formula of confession found in scripture. Thus, will it be their way or the high way?

Outside of Catholicism, many examples can also be found. Many Protestants teach that baptism is not necessary for salvation. Instead, they suggest one say a prayer and receive God into their heart. However, was it not the Lord Himself who said, “he who believes and is baptized shall be saved, but he who does not believe shall be condemned” (**Mark 16:16**)? Whose ways are higher? This is further supported by the fact that there is not a single example in the New Testament of one practicing this plan of salvation (a sinner’s prayer), but example after example of first century Christians practicing what the Lord commands! Shall we follow man’s ways (**Matt. 15:9**) or THE WAY (**John 14:6**)?

In addition to their idea of salvation, they compound their error by suggesting that once a man is saved by their plan, he is always saved. In other words, they are suggesting that one can never fall from grace. While this might sound like a grand way (and is it ever an appealing way!), it is clearly not the “high way” of God. The Lord, through His apostle Paul, told His saints who were turning back to Judaism (which suggested another plan of salvation at this time—**Gal. 1:6-9**), “You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace” (**Gal. 5:4**). If one who is saved is always saved, than how is it he can fall from grace? Indeed, God’s ways take a much higher road than man’s lowly ways.

Now, we would not want to think of ourselves beyond reproach. For even amongst

churches of Christ, there are those who suggest a way higher than God's way. Regarding issues such as divorce and remarriage, the Lord said that there is only one acceptable reason for divorce in which remarriage is possible, and that is fornication (**Matt. 19:9**). However, many, in various ways, have tried to circumvent the Lord's plain teaching on this matter. Whose way is higher?

In addition to that doctrine, yet closely related, the seed of error is being sown by those who strive to use God's word to claim a false teacher can only be determined by his motives. Yet, was it not Jesus who said, you should judge a tree by its fruit (**Matt. 7:15-20**). Is not one of the fruits of a false teacher false teaching? Does not Jesus say they will come to us in "sheep's clothing" (i.e., appearing innocent of motive)? Thus, motive is not the factor, for that is the seed of error. We are to look at the fruit of error—teaching and practice. It does not seem to get any clearer than this. Yet, when man is bent on having his way (fellowshipping those who teach error), over God's way (withdrawing from those who teach error—**Rom. 16:17-18; 2 John 9-11; Eph. 5:11-12; 2 Thess. 3:14-15; Tit. 3:10-11; 1 Tim. 6:3ff**), does not man make his own way the high way?

This same controversy is compounded by those who are trying to use Paul's clear teaching in **Romans 14** on matters of personal liberty, or conscience, to advocate continued ongoing fellowship with doctrinal and moral error (i.e., fellowship those who teach error on marriage, divorce and remarriage, and such). Indeed, no Christian is at liberty or can conscientiously endorse, partake of, fellowship, teach or practice things contrary to God's way (**1 Pet. 2:16; 1 Tim. 1:19; Tit. 1:15-16**). Even in issues of personal liberty (**Rom. 14; 1 Cor. 8; 1 Cor. 10:23-33**), our way does not rule. God tells us, "if your brother is grieved because of your food, you are no longer walking in love. Do not destroy with your food the one for whom Christ died" (**Rom. 14:15; cf. 1 Cor. 8:9, 13; 10:24**).

Am I suggesting "My way or the highway?" You may ask, "Can't we all, as sincere people, interpret the scriptures differently? What makes your interpretation right and mine wrong?" The truth is that God's word is understandable (**Eph. 5:17**) and when it comes to the faith, there is only one (**Eph. 4:5**). Thus, we both can't be right! Anyone who is sincere will acknowledge this as fact and realize, when one's ways directly conflict with God's ways, we have made our ways higher than His ways. Whose ways do we choose? Since God has told us His way is the high way (**Isa. 55:8-9; John 14:6**), the answer should be clear.

"What's In Your Bucket?"

If you were walking from a well carrying a bucket of water and someone jostled you, there could be spilled from the bucket only that which it contained.

As you walk along the way of life, people are constantly bumping into you. If your life is full of ill nature, bad temper, and ugly disposition, those things will be spilled from it. If it is so full of proper Christian spirit, you will spill a smile or a pleasant remark. You can spill from your bucket only that which it contains.

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**