



# The Voice of Truth



May 24, 2009

## God's Word

By Jimmy Pettigrew

No other book in the annals of history has had so many enemies as God's word, the Bible. God's word has to do with things that pertain to life and godliness (**2 Peter 1:3**). God's word, the pattern, brings hope, not despair; clarity, not confusion; direction, not deviation; rejoicing, not rejection; and ultimately, heaven, not hell. God's word:

1. Saves (**James 1:21**).
2. Sanctifies (**John 17:17**).
3. Cleanses (**Ephesians 5:26**).
4. Gives light (**Psalms 119:105**).
5. Gives understanding (**Psalms 119:11**).
6. Is man's hope against sin (**Psalms 119:11**).
7. Is the truth whereby man may be free from sin (**1 Timothy 2:4**).
8. Purifies the soul (**1 Peter 1:3**).
9. Is the power to produce new life (**James 1:18**).
10. Produces godliness (**2 Peter 1:3**).
11. Is quick, living, and powerful (**Hebrews 4:12**).
12. Is able to build us up and give us an inheritance (**Acts 20:32**).
13. Is able to make us wise unto salvation (**2 Timothy 3:15**).
14. Brings deliverance (**Psalms 107:20**).
15. Is indestructible (**Psalms 119:89**).
16. Cannot be broken (**John 10:35**).
17. Will ultimately judge us (**John 12:48**).

God's word is our guide, our pattern to follow. In a world of multitudes of different faiths and "churches," everyone needs to hear the truth. Everyone needs to see the examples of those who claim to live for Christ truly doing so. Those outside of Christ need to see God's pattern, His word put into practice in the church of Christ, in Christian homes, and in Christian lives. There is one and only one authorized standard for man's conduct. From that only can man learn what God would have him to know. Contrary to the

imaginative notions of vision claimers, God does not speak to man through visions today. Notwithstanding, the claims of those who say the Holy Spirit speaks to them and leads them separate and apart from the written word, whispering instructions to them, laying things on their hearts, no man since the close of the first century has heard one syllable from God in that fashion!

People need to cast aside these false teachers, the wisdom of men, their creeds and doctrines, commandments and disciplines, imaginations, deceptions, and misguided opinions, and let us all open our hearts to the inspired written revelation of God, the Bible. Therein He proclaims His pattern. Thereby, He speaks to man today, specifically through the New Testament of Christ (**Hebrews 1:1-3**). As the old saying goes, we speak where the Bible speaks and remain silent where the Bible is silent. We call Bible things by Bible names and do Bible things in Bible ways. To do otherwise would be foolish.

God's word is living, active, sharp, pierces, divides and discerns (**Hebrews 4:12**). The Bible has endured time, persecution and criticism, because it is the eternal word of our eternal God. The Book contains the mind of God, so read it slowly, frequently and prayerfully. It is given you in life, will be opened in judgment, and be remember forever. It involves the highest responsibility, rewards and greatest labor, and condemns all who trifle with its holy contents. "And for this cause we also thank God without ceasing, that, when ye received from us the word of the message, (even the word) of God, ye accepted (it) not (as) the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God, which also worketh in you that believe" (**1 Thessalonians 2:13**).

## “Our Choices Have Consequences”

By Jarrod Jacobs

Perhaps this title seems trite, but this oft-neglected point is still true. Depending upon the choices, the consequences can be either good or bad, but it is nonetheless true that the consequences of our choices can be felt for years to come.

For example, consider the actions of Lamech (of Cain) in **Genesis 4:23-25**. Lamech knew of Cain’s lying and murder of Abel (v. 6-10). When he was guilty of the same, he justified himself in his actions, saying, “*If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy and sevenfold*” (v. 24). Cain’s wrong choices had consequences which had spanned several generations.

At times, some choices have consequences that span several hundred years! In **Exodus 17**, we learn that the Amalekites attacked the Jews at Rephidim (v. 8). They won this fight (v. 13), but the wars would continue with the Amalekites for many years to come (v. 16). After **Exodus 17**, we read of the Amalekites on numerous occasions. There are occasions when God expected those people to be utterly destroyed, but the Jews would not do it (**Num. 13:28-32; I Sam. 15**). As a result, the Amalekites continued to plague and hurt the Jews. For instance, it was an Amalekite who lied and claimed responsibility for killing Saul (**II Sam. 2:1-16**). In fact, it was an Amalekite (Agagite) who almost succeeded in killing the entire Jewish race (**Est. 3-7**)! The bad choices of the Jews through the years in not utterly destroying these people had brought about consequences that were felt for hundreds of years!

In our Bible studies, we learn that there were also those who made good choices. Let us remember the good examples of Lois and Eunice (**II Tim. 1:5**). Their decisions, their examples, their active involvement in the reading and studying of Scriptures (**II Tim. 3:15**), served to encourage Timothy to be faithful to God. They also serve to encourage us today. Lois, as a young girl, would have no idea as to how her life might develop. Yet, as a grandmother, it was clear that her decisions produced a godly daughter, who then

had a godly son. Timothy then was an asset to the Lord’s work in the first century and an example to men even to this day! Yes, the consequences of good choices can echo for years to come.

It goes without saying that the choices Christ made while upon this earth have produced consequences which are felt to this day. We know Christ chose to go to the cross. He went willingly (**Matt. 27:53-56**), and the consequences of that conscious, loving choice (**Jn. 15:13**) reverberate to this very hour! His words and actions are recorded so that we might know how to live. They are written, “*that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name*” (**Jn. 20:31**).

Now comes the time to examine ourselves (**II Cor. 13:5**). What about our choices? Do we realize that even those choices considered “minor” or “insignificant” can have an impact on the lives of people in years to come? We perhaps cannot truly appreciate the power in a “choice” word, or a particular action done until we see the results in the next generation. Yet, it is there!

Sometimes our choices are made during emotional moments, whether in the heat of anger (ex: Nebuchadnezzar, **Dan. 3**), or in passion (ex: **David, II Sam. 11**), etc., and we must live with the consequences for the rest of our lives! Sometimes we make choices (to speak or act) in haste, and upon reflection, realize this was not the best choice. By then, it is too late. (ex: Herod, **Matt. 14:1-12**)

On the other hand, we see people who make conscious, careful choices based upon God’s word, and the evidence available. Those people welcome the consequences of their choices because they know they are right with God (ex: Mary, **Luke 1-2**; the apostles, **Acts 4-5**).

While on earth, Jesus said that we have a choice to make, and told us the consequences we face. We can walk the “narrow way” or the “broad way” (**Matt. 7:13-14**). We cannot go both ways at the same time, though! Therefore, when we make a choice, we must face the consequences. Knowing

this is the case, doesn't it make sense that we would make wise and godly decisions so that the consequences we face might be faced with God's blessing? I think of the statement made by Peter when he wrote, "*If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf*" (1 Pet. 4:14-16). Whether our choices reflect righteousness or our choices reflect wickedness, we will face the consequences. Too, these consequences will echo down through new generations of people. Knowing this is so, will we make right choices, or will we not? Will we make the decisions that Satan loves, or that God loves?

Now, to specifics: When it comes to how we will speak, will we choose to speak words of kindness, truth, and love and accept the consequences (Eph. 4:25, 29; Col. 4:6)? Or, will we choose to speak words of rancor, bitterness, gossip, dishonesty, and the like and face those consequences (Eph. 4:31, 5:4, 6; II Pet. 2:1-3)? Every day we have a choice as to how we will speak. What will we say? Will we be silent at the right times? What will we do? (Jas. 3) Have we considered the consequences we are facing as a result of the words we say, or the times when we were silent and should have been speaking? What about the consequences from the times we chose to speak when we should have been silent?

Further, what kind of clothes will we choose to wear? Will we wear clothes that reveal the skin and therefore a carnal mind (Prov. 7:10)? Or, will we wear clothes which reveal "a meek and quiet spirit" (I Pet. 3:3-5; I Tim. 2:9-10)? Remember, no one on earth was clothed until God clothed His children with the "coats" or "tunics" which covered their bodies (Gen. 3:21). Since that time, God demanded men and women be properly clothed. What choices are we making along this line? What consequences might we have

to face because our friends, our children, and others see us clothed the way they do?

What choices are we making in the realm of how we treat others? Jesus taught us to treat others the way we want to be treated (Matt. 7:12). Are we doing this? He said that the command second only to loving God is to love our neighbors as ourselves (Matt. 22:39). What choices are we making in this area? How are we doing with our "neighbors" in the home? It is true that the preacher, the elders, the deacons, nor any other member of this church follows us around 24 hours a day. Therefore, at times, what we are at home and what we are in public can become two separate entities! Is this so? Do our children see us "transform" from one person to another when we come home? Consider well the consequences of such choices. Might our children renounce Christ, not because of what the "preacher said," but because of what they see at home? On the other hand, might a generation of people be saved and continue to follow the Lord as a result of what was shown and said (i.e., by our choices to do right) in the home? "*And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*" (Eph. 6:4). God looked at Abraham and said, "*For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment*" (Gen. 18:19). Could God say this when He looks at us? Too, what do our children say; what do their friends say; what do the parents of our children's friends say, when they look at us? Yes, our choices have consequences!

As is evident in our study, these points are not made lightly. I am not suggesting that I have always made the right decision. However, when we consider how our choices affect us and others in light of eternity, may we be praying to God to help us make the right decisions. As the apostle Peter shows us, it is better to be right with God than it is to be popular with men. Our choices have consequences, and it is high time we thought soberly about this fact. Some consequences will continue to reverberate for

years after we are gone! Whether those consequences are pleasant, sweet, and righteous; or they are caustic, bitter, and wicked, depends upon the choices we make today. Choose wisely! *Credit: www.southside-churchofchrist.com*

## Suffering for Christ By David J. Riggs

Suffering is to be expected by those who follow Christ. "Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution." (2 Tim. 3:12). Christians are not to regard it odd or uncommon when they are made to suffer for Christ. "Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you." (1 Pet. 4:12). Instead of being surprised when persecutions come, one should be surprised if they don't come. In fact, one would do well to consider whether or not he is living godly in Christ if he is not suffering persecutions. Jesus said, "Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for so did their fathers to the false prophets." (Luke 6:26).

When one is converted to Christ and begins to live godly in Him, persecutions of all kinds are usually heaped upon him. Often relatives and loved ones turn against him. Jesus said, "Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man's enemies will be those of his own household." (Matt. 10:34-36). Often the first to place undesirable terms on the new converts are their own close friends and companions. "In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with them in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of you." (1 Pet. 4:4).

Persecutions, whatever they may be, must be endured. We cannot place our relatives and loved ones above the Lord (Matt. 10:37). We must carry our cross daily (Luke 9:23). We will be hated of all men for his name's sake, but we must endure (Matt. 10:22). We will have sore tribulations, but we must be faithful to death (Rev. 2:10). "If we endure, we shall also reign with Him." (2 Tim. 2:12).

We should never be ashamed for suffering as Christians. "Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter." (1 Pet. 4:16). Jesus said, "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him the Son of Man will be ashamed when He comes in His own glory, and in His Father's, and of the holy angels." (Luke 9:26).

Persecutions must be endured with patience. "But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God." (1 Pet. 2:20). "...Knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope." (Rom. 5:3-4).

Let us count it a great honor and privilege to be allowed to take part in the afflictions of Christ. The apostles rejoiced because they were counted worthy to suffer for His name (Acts 5:41). The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed (Rom. 8:18). "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." (2 Cor. 4:17).

### About the Hillcrest church of Christ

Evangelist: Jimmy Pettigrew

#### How to Contact Us

Telephone: (920)499-5677  
E-mail: hillcrestcofc@live.com



#### Our Address

1621 Hillcrest Drive  
Green Bay, WI 54313



#### Schedule of Assembly

Bible Study: Sunday, 9:00am  
Worship Service: Sunday, 10:00am  
Bible Study: Wednesday, 7:00pm\*

\*A song service is held on the last Wednesday of every month

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