



The Voice of Truth



September 27, 2009

"Charges To Christians"

By Jimmy Pettigrew

One of the real problems of Christianity is a lack of dedicated service to Christ. You must serve Christ zealously and faithfully. Living the Christian life is pictured in the New Testament as: warfare (**Eph. 6:10-18**), an athletic event (**1 Cor. 9:24-26**; Gal. 5:7). A good start, so important in a race, does not insure a successful finish. Christians need to remember these charges for running the Christian race.

(1) ". . . stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong" (**1 Cor. 16:13**). Paul exhorts the Corinthians to stand fast. Meaning, stand fast in the truth (**Jno. 17:17**), God's word (**Psa. 119:9**), the New Testament (**2 Cor. 3:6**), the gospel of Christ (**Rom. 1:16**), the doctrine or teaching of Christ (**2 Jno. 9**). This is the urgency needed by all saints! We must prove our worth as a soldier of Christ and fight the spiritual warfare that Christians must wage! Stand fast in the faith, always be eager to defend (**1 Pet. 3:15**) and contend (**Jude 3**). Stand for things which Christ stood for, stand for the things which Christ died for, stand and ask for the old paths (**Jer. 6:16**).

(2) "Abstain from every form of evil" (**1 Thess. 5:22**). When one has learned what is good or true, and what is evil and false, he should hold fast the true and abstain from the evil. In **1 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" (**Prov. 4:14-15**).

(3) "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (**Jno. 14:15**). This says in effect, that love for the Lord is evidenced in keeping His commandments. If you'll keep on loving Me, you'll keep my commandments. "And hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He that saith, I know Him, and keep-eth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him" (**1 Jno. 2:3-5**). "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love, even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love" (**Jno. 15:9-10**). This love for God is not simply an emotion. It is a disposition that seeks the glory of God. It is an attitude of submission to His will. It is the desire to do His bidding! Love is not only obeying commands; it is having them! "He who has my commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to Him" (**Jno. 14:21**). Love **MUST** be expressed in obedience! Such glorifies the Son and thus, glorifies the Father. Do you love the Father? Do your actions show that you do?

(4) "... Be ye yourselves also holy in all manner of living" (**1 Pet. 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 over 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 to forget the cares of the world and take time to be holy! We should study God's word and pray every day.

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 it, live it and stand fast for it!

What Is A Christian? By Jimmy Pettigrew

Those who live for the Lord are called by many different terms in the scriptures: brethren, saints, disciples, and children of God. Perhaps no term denotes one who is "of Christ" or belongs to Christ, better than the term "Christian". The term Christian appears three times in the New Testament (**1 Peter 4:16; Acts 11:26; Acts 26:28**). But, "What Is A Christian?"

A Christian is a disciple of Christ (**Acts 11:26**). A disciple is a learner (**2 Timothy 2:15**). God's people were always required to learn God's ways (**Deuteronomy 5:1; 31:12**). Christ tells His disciples to be learners of God's word (**Matthew 11:29**). Paul tells us to learn in what is written (**1 Corinthians 4:6**). Christianity is a taught religion (**John 6:44-45; Matthew 28:18-20**). One does not become a Christian through dreams or visions (**John 8:30-32**) or by direct working of the Holy Spirit. If conversion is produced by a direct operation of the Holy Spirit on the sinner, then obviously men do not need a Bible.

If men can be converted without the Bible, then they can be converted without faith (**Romans 10:17**). The process of becoming and being a Christian is a learning process (**2 Peter 3:18**).

What is a Christian? He is a follower of Christ! Jesus left an example of life to be followed (**1 Peter 2:21**). Christians are "To walk, even as he walked," (**1 John 2:6**). The life Christ lived is not just to be admired, talked about, or sung about, but is to be followed. Christ left us an example in all things: obedience (**John 4:34; Hebrews 5:9**); purity (**1 Peter 2:22; Hebrews 1:9; 1 John 3:3; Romans 12:9**). Jesus is our example in serving others (**Matthew 20:28**), in forgiving others (**Colossians 3:13**), in the work of saving souls (**Luke 19:10**), and in His love for His fellowman (**John 13:34**).

What is a Christian? A Christian is one who is not ashamed (**1 Peter 4:16**). He is not ashamed of the Lord's word (**Mark 8:38**). He is not ashamed of the gospel of Christ (**Romans 1:16**). I'm so afraid that the church today is stepping back from what Paul said in Romans 1:16. Today we are finding people that are ashamed of it. And someone will say, "Not me, I'm not ashamed of it." Why aren't you living by the truth? Why aren't you practicing truth? One cannot be saved if he/she is ashamed of Christ. To be ashamed of the gospel is to be ashamed of God, Who is the Author of it. He is not ashamed to be part of the religious minority (**Matthew 7:13-14**).

The Christian is one who glorifies God (**1 Peter 4:16**). He is not ashamed for the world to know where he stands and for what he stands. The song "I'm Not Ashamed To Own My Lord," expresses the true sentiment of the Christian.

"Break Up Your Fallow Ground" By Jarrod Jacobs

In **Jeremiah 4:1-3**, Jeremiah wrote, "*If thou wilt return, O Israel, saith the LORD, return unto me: and if thou wilt put away thine abominations out of my sight, then shalt thou not remove. And thou shalt swear, The LORD liveth, in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness; and the nations shall bless*

themselves in him, and in him shall they glory. For thus saith the LORD to the men of Judah and Jerusalem, Break up your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns" The word "fallow" means, "land that has fallen out of cultivation, or has never been cultivated..." (Pulpit Commentary, Vol. XI, p. 82). Literally, Jeremiah was saying, "Do not plant your good resolutions in a heart filled up with roots of thorns, but first rake up the soil, and clear it of noxious germs, and then sow the seed which will grow up in a holy life" (ibid. p. 79). In other words, these people needed to prepare their hearts to serve God by repenting of past sins! This was the point being made by Jeremiah. What is required for true repentance? Let us study the Scriptures and see.

What Repentance Is Not

We need to understand that repentance is not simply a promise to quit sinning. Thousands of people decide they need to quit drinking, smoking, cursing, fornication, etc., simply because it is "bad". This is not repentance. Where is the remorse? When God called for repentance, He not only wanted people to stop the sin, but to also be conscious of why they were stopping (**Jer. 4:8; Est. 4:1-3; Matt. 11:21**).

Repentance is not just being sorry. Here is the opposite extreme to the person who just stops a sinful act. A person may be sorry for what he has done, but this does not necessarily mean he is going to stop! There are many examples in the Bible of people who were made sorry for their deeds, but they still did not repent (**Jer. 51:28-29; II Cor. 5:10b**)!

Confessing that one is a sinner is not repentance, either. While it is necessary for one to realize that he has sinned, this alone is not repentance. Many in the Bible declared that they were sinners, but they did not repent of their sins. Remember Pharaoh (**Ex. 9:27, 10:16**)? Remember Judas (**Matt. 27:4**)?

Walking down the aisle in a church building is not repentance. Some have the mistaken notion that if we simply walk down the aisle we have repented, or that this is a sign

of repentance. In the Bible studies I have done, I have not found any evidence of any New Testament Christian having an "aisle" to "walk down"! Seriously, what does this accomplish? There is no power in the aisle!

What Repentance Is

Repentance is defined as: "metanoeo; lit., to perceive afterwards (meta, after, implying change, noeo, to perceive, nous, the mind, the seat of moral reflection" (Vine's, p. 671). Mr. Thayer says repentance is, "to change one's mind; to change one's mind for the better, heartily to amend with abhorrence of one's past sins; to withdraw or turn one's soul from" (Thayer's, p. 405).

Put simply, repentance not only involves remorse, but it also provokes us to change our ways and to please God. While we were correct in noting that repentance is not defined by any of those acts listed above "alone," we do find in Scripture where some of the things mentioned are included in repentance.

For example, the first step in repentance is realizing we have sinned. No one will repent if he does not know he has done wrong! The first century Christians came to this conclusion and repented (**Acts 2:37-38, 5:29-33, 13:16-41**). We need to understand that once one is old enough to make conscious decisions concerning right and wrong, then sin is not far behind (**Jas. 1:14-15; Rom. 3:23, 6:23**). We need to come to the understanding that we have sinned and need the forgiveness of God.

We must also realize that we cannot save ourselves. We cannot save ourselves on our own merits, it took Christ to redeem us (**Jn. 3:16; Rom. 5:6-10; Eph. 1:7**).

We must also understand that our sins were the reason Christ came and died on the cross (**Jn. 18:37; Lk. 19:10**), and we must have godly sorrow for that (**II Cor. 7:10**).

We need to decide to stop being a slave to sin (**Jn. 8:34**). Please understand, while stopping the sin is PART of repentance, it is not the TOTAL definition of repentance (**Rom. 6:16-18**).

Finally, we need to start obeying Christ.

Notice the words that are used in **Matthew 11:28-30**: “Come”, “Take”, “Learn”, and “Find”. These words imply action on our part! John the Baptist told people to, “bring forth fruits meet for repentance” (**Matt. 3:8; Lk. 3:8**). The apostle Paul said the same thing (**Acts 26:20**). Again, while positive action is a part of repentance, it is not the entire definition, as we have already seen. It requires complete action and a correct mindset in order to repent.

Conclusion

It has been said that repentance is the hardest step one must take in order to be saved. Even so, it is still a necessary step that one must take if we wish to please God (**Lk. 13:3, 5**). Let us truly repent of our sins and come humbly to the cross in obedience to Christ our King!

Credit: www.southside-churchofchrist.com

Living For Righteousness

By Jonathan L. Perz

It is not uncommon to hear someone say they live for something. An avid hunter might say he “lives to hunt.” An avid golfer might say the same regarding his favorite interest. Such a statement suggests a passion for some enjoyable activity. Well, have you ever heard a Christian say, “I live for righteousness?”

Regarding the Lord’s death, the apostle Peter writes, “...who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness...” (**1 Pet. 2:24**). Do we understand this concept today?

Too many professing Christianity have merely died to sin, but fail to live for righteousness. Hence, their Christian lives are dull and listless. There is no passion for what they have become, what they now do and

Who they now serve. Many who call themselves Christians have only come half way in their walk with Christ, but often give it all for some other worldly pursuit.

Someone who “lives for” something does not go half way, they go all the way. Have you ever spent time with a rabid hunter? They are nuts for the sport. They buy the best gear and go to extremes to scout, prepare, and partake of the hunt. Likewise, an avid golfer will eat, sleep and drink golf. The same applies for any person who is passionately committed to some activity. If people can get so fired-up about comparatively trivial matters, why are not those who profess Christianity “fired-up” about what they do? Why doesn’t every Christian “live for righteousness?”

Living for righteousness entails passion about serving God. It encompasses the whole of a Christian’s life. They work to support their Christian activities (cf. Eph. 4:28). They live to worship God with fellow saints (cf. **Heb. 10:24-25; Psa. 122:1**). They love to study from God’s word (cf. **2 Tim. 2:15**). They eat, drink and sleep Christianity (cf. **Matt. 5:36**). They would gladly lay down their life for Christ (cf. **Luke 14:26**)! They are passionate about what they believe!

Are you “living for righteousness?”

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

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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