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What Has God Given You to Do?

inevitably arise with some that are close to me in this life. Yet, it does not necessarily follow that brethren everywhere are going bad. I need to understand that God looks at the whole world! Conditions in the United States, or in any particular part of the country, do not represent what is happening in other places.

When we learn to trust God day by day, we will find that the "yoke" He lays upon us is bearable and doable (Matt. 11:28-30). There are many things out of my control that I should leave to God, trusting that He alone can handle them. Let each of us always look to our God, for He has given us His promises and they will never fail. ♦

Credit: www.moodychurchofchrist.com

Think It Over

Isn't it strange how some Christians can be pushed and insulted in the ticket line at a ball game, ignored at the barber shop or beauty shop, bawled out in the grocery store, yet they never cease to frequent these places? However, if they feel slighted at a church service, they often refuse to attend for weeks, and sometimes quit for good. Yes, it is strange, isn't it? Not only is it strange, it is inconsistent. Being peeved at the brethren and forsaking the Lord is as logical as being angry at the dog and kicking the cat. ♦

I Am Your Bulletin

- I am not just another piece of paper.
- I am your weekly church information sheet.
- I do not come to you easily, or without expense.
- I cost money, time, thought, and energy.
- I should not be taken for granted.
- I can only be as useful and valuable as you allow me to be.
- I am often abused and overlooked.
- Sometimes all I get is a fleeting glance.
- Sometimes all I get is a critical analysis.
- I want so much for you to read me, study me, appreciate me, and make me useful for your spiritual activity and development.
- I want to serve you. ♦

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

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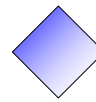


Schedule of Assembly

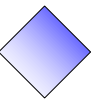
Bible Study: Sunday, 9:00am
Worship Service: Sunday, 10:00am
Bible Study: Wednesday, 7:00pm*

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

www.hillcrestchurchofchrist.com



The Voice of Truth



April 24, 2011

"CHRISTIAN LIVING"

By Jimmy Pettigrew

These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth (Revelation 14:4). Jesus is the One we should follow, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps (1 Peter 2:21). He is the way, and the truth, and the life (John 14:6). Jesus is the great pattern for everyone to follow (Luke 9:23). We need to walk as Christ walked (1 John 2:6). Why is Jesus the One we should fashion or pattern our life after? He was tempted like us, (Matthew 4:1-11; Hebrews 4:15) and did no sin (1 Peter 2:22). He is the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world (John 1:29), the Son of God (John 3:34) and lives forever (Revelation 1:18). Salvation is found in Him (Acts 4:12). Truly He is King of kings, and Lord of lords (Revelation 19:16). These are some of the reasons why man should fashion, pattern, and follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth (Revelation 14:4).

The perfect pattern of Jesus describes the Christian life as a life of service to God (Luke 22:42). It is the Christian's responsibility to serve God, not mammon (Matthew 6:24). Serving God means serving Christ, which in turn, means following and living for Christ (John 12:26). It is mockery to claim to be a servant of Christ while living in disobedience to Him (Luke 6:46). Living for Christ demands us to live differently. Jesus Christ changes people for good. Those once enslaved to sin (Ephesians 5:8), now walk in newness of life (Ephesians 4:24). The apostle Peter gives a good insight into the power of pure Christianity changing

people (1 Peter 4:1-5). To be a Christian, our manner of life is different. We do not live the way we did before. The Christian is distinctive! He dares to be different by the way of life. The conduct of a Christian is a powerful preacher. Let me ask some important questions:

1. Would you verbally proclaim that worship to God is insignificant, Bible study is unimportant, giving time, talent and financial resources are incidental to Christian living? What do you preach by your manner of life? Preachers should not have to BEG Christians to study, give generously, and attend every time the doors are opened. **TRUE SERVANTS DO NOT HAVE TO BE BEGGED!**
2. Would you declare the impossibility of apostasy (1 Corinthians 10:12; Hebrews 3:12-13)? What does your conduct preach?
3. Would you preach that erring brethren are not to be restored (Galatians 6:1; James 5:19-20)?
4. Would you preach that a Christian can dress in immodest clothing (1 Timothy 2:9-10)?
5. Would you preach that a Christian does not have to watch his\her speech (James 3)?

The conduct of the Christian will either adorn the doctrine or it will reveal a lack of dedication to Christ (Titus 2:10). Following our Master is the way we adorn the doctrine of Christ! Which are you doing? ♦

"I Have No Greater Joy"

By Jarrod Jacobs

One of the most stirring statements in the Bible is found in John's third epistle as he wrote of the joy he had when he heard of Gaius, and his faithfulness to God. John knew he was not long for this earth. Therefore, it encouraged him to know of others who would be left that stood for the truth. He rejoiced in the fact that Gaius was walking in the truth. As proof of this, please read III John 1-4: "The elder unto the wellbeloved Gaius, whom I love in the

truth. Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth. For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth."

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At this time, John simply refers to himself as “*The elder*.” This was because of his advancing years. In this letter, he writes to Gaius and tells him how much he appreciates all that he has done. This article will not deal with all of the third epistle of John, but I wish for us to simply consider John’s attitude at this time, and make some comparisons.

What Brings Us Joy?

In reading these few verses, we note that it brought John “*no greater joy*” than to hear about “his children” still walking in truth. “*Children*” has reference to people he had taught and converted to the Lord. The apostle Paul used similar terms in his letters (**I Cor. 4:15**; **Titus 1:4**; **I Tim. 1:2**). No doubt, the fact that Gaius was still standing for the truth in a time of hardships from without and within meant a great deal to the apostle. In like manner, it means a great deal today to know of those who, after suffering difficulties, still stand for “*the faith once delivered to the saints*” (**Jude 3**; **Prov. 25:25**). Brethren, does this bring us joy, too?

Do We Rejoice When We Hear Of Faithful Brethren?

Are we happy to hear about brethren in different parts of this country, and the world that are standing for the truth? Or, does our joy come solely from physical pursuits, such as our work, or recreational activities? Do we “rejoice greatly” when we hear about our fellow-heirs and fellow-laborers doing what they ought? Or, are we the kind that only rejoices when we have some juicy “tidbit” of gossip to spread about the brethren?

John said he “*rejoiced greatly*,” and that he had “*no greater joy*” than to hear of the faithful life of Gaius, as well as other brethren. In saying he had “*no greater joy*,” he was saying that there was nothing that produced greater joy for him in this life than knowing of his “*children*” walking in truth.

When the Kingdom of God Appears to Fail

By Larry Rouse

How often has a child of God despaired thinking that the kingdom of God was going to end with his generation? Elijah had concluded that he “alone was left” of the people of God and because of that God should take his life and end this lost cause (**1 Kings 19:4, 10**). God quickly reminded him that he had 7,000 who were faithful to him and then put Elijah back to work (**1 Kings 19:18**).

I have seen this same attitude especially in older brethren. They ask about the brethren in different places, not out of malice, looking for something that is wrong; but in genuine concern, wishing to rejoice with brethren over the good work that is going on for the Lord in various parts of this country and the world. What about us? Do we have the mind set of John and Gaius, or of Diotrephes, who “*loveth to have the preeminence*” (**III Jn. 9**)?

Sources Of Joy

What are sources of joy for us? Are we like John, Paul, and the other apostles, who drew strength from Christ and from their brethren? Are we the kind who must always find fault in others, or can we look for and see brethren who stand for the truth, and say that they cause us to “rejoice greatly”?

In like manner, can we say as John that we “*have no greater joy*” than to hear about brethren walking in truth? Or, are there other things that bring us a “greater joy”? Perhaps we are guilty of placing more emphasis on our boat, car, vacations, etc., than the Lord (See: **Matt. 6:33**). Perhaps our “joy” is found in placing our family before God (See: **Matt. 10:34-37**). Unfortunately, many today are guilty of covetousness, or “*idolatry*” (**Col. 3:5**). Have we ever considered how idolatrous this country really is? You see, idolatry is the religion of sight in opposition to that of faith. Because this is true, whatever you wish to place before God becomes your idol, regardless of whether or not you physically bow down to it. Whatever you place before God becomes your “joy.”

Friend, what is your joy? David said the blessed man “*delights*” in God’s word (**Ps. 1:2, 119:35, 92**). Yet, in what do you delight? John said he rejoiced greatly in Gaius, as well as his “*children*” because of their stand for the truth. Are we rejoicing in these things, or in worldly matters? Do we remember why we are here upon this earth (**Ecc. 12:13**)? Aren’t these serious questions about joy? How will you answer? (**II Cor. 13:5**) *Credit: www.southside-churchofchrist.com* ♦

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as God did. Because of this eternal view he was now very thankful to be part of the faithful few. He writes, “*When I thought how to understand this, It was too painful for me—Until I went into the sanctuary of God; Then I understood their end*” (**Psa. 73:16-17**).

God’s Promises an Eternal Kingdom

When we look to the scriptures, we find strong promises concerning God’s kingdom. Concerning the church Jesus would build, He plainly stated that “*the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it*” (**Matt. 16:18**). When Isaiah prophesied of the coming Messiah and His reign, he plainly stated that this kingdom would never end. He writes, “*And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end*” (**Isa. 9:6-7**).

Gloom and Doom—Cases in Point

Over the years I have heard brethren lament the dwindling of a local church, or the departure of a new generation into apostasy, or even the general worldliness of the professed Christians they have observed. I have heard some say that “churches of Christ are going to become extinct!” In another case I heard a man who had left the Lord’s church quoting growth statistics to convince others that a return to the Bible alone would not work. He boldly proclaimed that “these churches are dying on the vine because of their legalism.” Should we become discouraged by our own impressions of the church around us? Should we surrender to the spin of men with self-serving agendas?

“Whittling” on God’s End of the Stick

We need to remember what burden God has placed upon us and what burden He has not. The Lord wants me to walk by faith and to spread God’s word to all who will hear (**1 Cor. 3:5-7**). It is not my job to determine the numbers who are faithful or to be responsible for the welfare of God’s people everywhere. God is the one who knows who are His, and He can well take care of them! Is it not written, “Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: ‘The Lord knows those who are His’” (**2 Tim. 2:19**)?

The Lord has given us His word and through it we can determine those who have “*the spirit of truth and the*

spirit of error” (**1 John 4:1, 6**). It is with these people we should stand and it with these people that we should build. Do we really understand what it means to be a child of God?

Our Confusion Over Names

We tend to take shortcuts in determining who men really are and where they actually stand. Rather than interact, discuss and apply the scriptures, men would rather place labels on people and churches and end further struggle. While I believe that “*churches of Christ*” (**Rom. 16:16**) are a Biblical designation for local assemblies of God’s people, I must never assume that wearing the right name makes one a child of God.

A true stand for the Lord is something that individuals must do for themselves. No one can do it for them, including their parents. As you look at God’s people in the Bible or in church history, you will find that departure comes when a new generation arises that “*did not know the Lord*” (**Jud. 1:10**). What happened in the time of the Judges has repeated itself in various times in history and will also be found in our times.

What should I do when “churches of Christ” begin to change the plan of salvation, compromise the scriptures, and bow to the denominational Baal’s of our day? What I need to do is serve God with confidence and work with others who also are walking by faith.

Do Not Transfer the Failures of Men to God

Why should I quit serving God over the failures of men? If God has placed me in a time of apostasy and worldliness, then I can be a Daniel rather than a Demas (**2 Tim. 4:10**)! God used Daniel to rebuild after a great apostasy where God Himself described the remaining faithful as a “*remnant*” (**Isa. 10:22-23**). When men fail to serve God, I need to have a faith that will stand with God. I can have a great confidence in spite of the pull and ridicule of men. The apostle Paul reminds us, “*Let God be true but every man a liar. As it is written: ‘That you may be justified in your words, and may overcome when you are judged’*” (**Romans 3:4**).

Know Your Limitations

We must constantly remind ourselves of our limited sight. My view of the world and of the church can change drastically when I depend on my own reality. Problems will

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