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soul, mind and strength and all around you will benefit!

worship. Sing your best to God and all will benefit. But when we sing to men to be heard of men, can we honestly say God is getting our first and best? Pray most fervently to God and all will benefit. But when we pray to men to be heard of men, can we say we are truly giving God our first and best? Hunger and thirst after God with all your heart, God deserves our first and best! Did He withhold His first and His best from us when He gave us His only begotten Son? Certainly not! Couple this with the fact that we didn't deserve Jesus and you have all the reason you need to give Him your first and best in every aspect of your life! Think on these things... Credit: www.moodychurchofchrist.com ♦

Things That Impress Visitors

1. Members that day dream or sleep through the sermon; talk during observance of the Lord's Supper.
2. Members that open a bottle of pop during services which makes a noise each time it opens.
3. Scribbling in and playing with the hymnals.
4. Members who whisper, talk, write notes, and pass pictures, etc. during services.
5. Members who are privileged to serve during the worship, but are so over medicated that they sound drunk.
6. Persistent late-comers who disturb and distract the worshipers.
7. Members who do not speak to visitors. ♦

THINK ABOUT IT!

When a farmer stops plowing his land, stops planting seed, and stops harvesting his crops, he has stopped doing those things that identify him as being a farmer. When a Christian stops attending worship services regularly, stops studying, stops giving as he has been prospered, and has stopped working for the Lord, he has stopped being a Christian because he has stopped doing those things that identify him as a Christian. "By their fruits ye shall know them," (Matthew 7:20). ♦

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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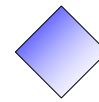


Schedule of Assembly

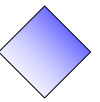
Bible Study: Sunday, 9:00am
Worship Service: Sunday, 10:00am
Bible Study: Wednesday, 7:00pm*

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

www.hillcrestchurchofchrist.com



The Voice of Truth



May 8, 2011

"Nothing But The Blood Of Jesus"

By Jimmy Pettigrew

"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23), wrote the apostle Paul. Sin then, for all accountable persons, is a fact and a reality. "For the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). Sin separates one from God (Isaiah 59:1-2). Is there any hope for man? How could man be brought back in favor with God? Nothing but the blood of Jesus could do it! "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life" (Romans 5:10). Knowing the results of sin as we do should bring us to the realization of the great need of the blood of Jesus Christ, since nothing but the blood of Jesus is the remedy for sin. "What can wash away my sins, nothing but the blood of Jesus." Let us look at some of the benefits of the blood of Christ.

Nothing but the blood of Jesus provides for man's redemption. "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Ephesians 1:7). To "redeem" means to buy back. Christians have been "bought with a price" (1 Corinthians 6:20), and that price is the blood of Jesus Christ. We have been redeemed "with the precious blood of Christ" (1 Peter 1:19). Jesus paid His own blood. The church was "purchased" with the blood of Christ (Acts 20:28).

Nothing but the blood of Jesus provides for man's sins being washed away. "And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood" (Revelation 1:5). Because Christ loves us, He washed us from our sins. The means by which Christ released us from our sins is by His blood.

Nothing but the blood of Jesus provides for man's justification. "Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him" (Romans 5:9). To "justify" means to declare one free

of guilt; being guilty, man is in need of justification. Nothing but the blood of Jesus Christ will take away the guilt of sin.

Nothing but the blood of Jesus provides for man's reconciliation. "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life" (Romans 5:10). The word "reconcile" means to be brought back to agreeable conditions. Man, who became God's enemy to because of transgression, was brought back on friendly terms with God, through the blood of Jesus Christ.

We know that the blood of Jesus is essential to man's salvation; then how can one contract the blood of Christ? Jesus shed His blood in His death (John 19:34). The only blood that can save and cleanse us is that which He shed in His death. And the only way we can reach that blood is said to be when we are baptized into His death! Paul, in his epistle to the church in Rome, pens the following words: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:3-4). Until one is baptized into Christ (Galatians 3:26-27) and His death (Romans 6:3-4), he has not contacted the powerful, cleansing blood! Some people say we don't need to be baptized, that we are saved by grace only, and I would agree that we are saved by grace (Ephesians 2:8-10). Question: Where is grace found? "Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 2:1). Grace is found in Christ! How do we get in Christ? One is baptized into Christ (Gal. 3:26-27). No sectarian preacher can point to a single passage that shows entrance into Christ by another means than baptism! "What can wash away my sins, Nothing but the blood of Jesus." We have access to that blood! ♦

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“The Bible Touches Men’s Lives”

By Jarrod Jacobs

I continue to be amazed at how relevant, how “up-to-date” the Bible really is. Though it was completed some 2000 years ago, it is still as relevant as today’s web page! How can I say this? What proof do I have? Please consider a few examples in the Bible that touch our lives to this present day.

Sin

Have we considered the fact that sin has been with man since **Genesis 3**? Ever since Adam and Eve sinned against God (**v. 6**), sin has been in this world and harming men and women, physically and spiritually.

The Bible addresses the problem of sin as well as its remedy. The Bible describes sin as a transgression, or an omission of God’s law (**I Jn. 3:4; Jas. 4:17**). In thinking about sin, James reminds us that sin occurs as a result of man yielding to temptation. Specifically, he says, “*Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death*” (**Jas. 1:14-15**).

John adds another “layer” to our study when he writes, “*Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever*” (**I Jn. 2:15-17**).

Therefore, a person who yields to temptations through the lusts of the flesh or eyes, or the pride of life has succumbed to sin, just as Adam and Eve did in the long ago (**Gen. 3:6**); and as others have done since that time (**Rom. 3:23**). This sin then leads to spiritual death (separation from God).

Having said this, it begs questions such as: “Does sin still exist today?” and if so, “Is there a remedy for sin?” If we answer “Yes”, then we must also admit to the relevancy of the Bible, because the Bible describes both sin and its remedy in great detail (**Rom. 6:23, 6:3-6, 16-18**).

While we live, we have the opportunity to be saved from sin through Christ (**Lk. 19:10; I Tim. 1:15; Mk. 16:16**). Yet, if we refuse, then we will die in our sins and be lost in

eternity. So says the Scripture (**II Thess. 1:6-9; Rev. 21:8; etc**).

It is the Bible that describes God’s plan for salvation in the sending of His Son to this earth for the remission of sins (**Jn. 3:16; Matt. 20:28; Lk. 19:10**). Not only this, but God also describes how one can meet the requirements for accepting Christ’s salvation. This is done through faith in Christ, repentance of sins, confession of Christ as the Son of God, and being baptized for the remission of sins (**Heb. 11:6; Jn. 8:24; Lk. 13:3; Acts 17:30; Rom. 10:10; I Pet. 3:21; Acts 2:36-38**). Then, as a child of God, we need to be faithful (**I Cor. 15:58; Rev. 2:10**), avoiding temptation and the pitfalls of sin (**I Cor. 10:13; Jas. 4:7-8**), and praying for forgiveness when we fall (**Acts 8:22; I Jn. 1:9**), so that we can have a home in Heaven one day.

Do we believe this, though? It is high time we were honest and admitted the true place the Bible has in the lives of men in the 21st century. It touches us. It is relevant and furnishes us completely for every good work (**II Tim. 3:17**).

The Promise To Abraham

In the long ago, God made a promise to Abraham. He called Abraham to be the father of many nations, and told him, “*I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered*” (**Gen. 13:16**). He stated on another occasion, “*Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be*” (**Gen. 15:5**). On yet a third occasion, God repeated His promise to Abraham, stating, “*That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies*” (**Gen. 22:17**).

As we study the life of Abraham and Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, and his 12 sons, as well as Abraham’s other children through Hagar and Keturah (**Gen. 25:1-2**); there is no question that God fulfilled His promise to Abraham in a physical way. Yet, as we study the Bible, we see something else emerge. Namely, God fulfilled His promise to Abraham in a spiritual manner as well.

What do we mean by this? Let the Bible answer. In **Galatians 3:26-27**, it says that those of us who are

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children of God “*by faith*” are such because we have been baptized into Christ. In other words, baptism makes us children of God by faith. As we continue reading this chapter, it says, “*There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise*” (**Gal. 3:28-29**). Did you see that? In addition to being Christ’s when baptized, the Bible also connects us with Abraham when we are baptized! Add to this Peter’s statement (**I Pet. 3:6**) where he says that women who are Christians are called “daughters of Sarah”, and we see how the Bible touches our lives to this day!

Giving God Your First and Best

By Jonathan L. Perz

By the end of the Old Testament, the Israelites had a problem. *They ceased giving God their best and began sacrificing “the stolen, the lame and the sick.”* Serving God had become “*a weariness*” to them. They “*sneered*” at the table of the Lord, declaring it “*contemptible*.” As a result, God cursed their blessings and shunned their sacrifices, making them contemptible before all the people (**Malachi 1:1-2:9**).

Herein lies one of the most fundamental and vital principles of Christianity, and at the same time, one of the biggest problems with Christians today. Every single worthwhile endeavor in our lives will be significantly enhanced if we will simply learn to put God first and give Him our best.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught us to “*seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness*” (**Matt. 6:33**). While the context here is one of worrying about the needs of this life, the principle stands—put God first and give Him your very best and He will take care of the rest.

The problem is that we are too concerned about our own things to give God our very best. Paul wrote on one occasion, “*For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus*” (**Phil. 2:21**). Is such a testimony of your life? Does this describe the end result of the decisions you make on a daily basis? It is far too easy to read this about someone else and affirm it. It is another thing altogether to humbly and honestly “own up” when it is stated to describe the reality of our own lives. Can we honestly say God is getting our first and best in every avenue of life?

Another problem is that we don’t trust God with our

When you became a Christian, and yes, every time someone becomes a Christian, the promise God made to Abraham that his seed would be like the “*dust,*” “*sand,*” and “*stars*” in multitude is fulfilled. Abraham has a family that increases daily because of God’s promise. Yes, those who are Christians are a part of this family. Yes, the Bible touches our lives because we are recipients of a blessing that God had promised in the days of Abraham! How amazing is that?

Conclusion

Away with this notion that the Bible is not relevant for men and women today. The Bible touches our lives daily!!

Credit: www.southside-churchofchrist.com ♦

best, so He does not come first in our lives. As hard as it might be to hear, it is true. If we trusted God, we would give Him our first and best without reservation. As it stands—if we are honest—God often takes a back seat to us as we see to our needs first, then His will. This can be illustrated in our time management, our laying by in store, our assembling, our sharing of the gospel, our prayer lives, our Bible study, our recreation time, etc. While we may say we are giving God our best, our works too often belie us. If we want to honestly say we trust God with our best, we need to daily put Him first!

Hardly realized and rarely practiced is one of the key elements in all of this. Giving God our first and best will result in us receiving the best. The best husbands and wives are first and foremost godly husbands and wives (**Eph. 5:22-32**). The best parents are first and foremost godly parents (**Eph. 6:4**). The best employers and employees are first and foremost godly employers and employees (**Eph. 6:5-9**). When we give God our first and best in all of these areas of our lives, we will inevitably be giving our spouses, our children, our employees and employers our best because it is the simple will of God that we live righteously and godly in all of these avenues of our lives. On the other hand, when we withhold our first and best from God, but try to fulfill the role of spouse, parent and employer/employee, the blessing of God is missing in our endeavors.

The same can be said of our worship and edifying the brethren (**Heb. 10:24-25**). Edifying and provoking the saints to love and good works in the assembly is truly a by-product of putting God first and giving Him our best in