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15:4-5). He put the teaching of God in such contrast with human error that it was impossible for his hearers to misunderstand or fail to see the truth. If we use the Lord's method on some present day religious practice, we would be no more unkind or un-Christian than was our Lord.

DO NOT FELLOWSHIP ERROR

The apostle Paul stated that error will eat as canker or gangrene. "And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymeanaeus and Philetus, who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already, and overthrow the faith of some." (2 Tim. 2:17-18). False doctrine grows worse and worse and eats away the soul as gangrene eats away the flesh. Those who put all emphasis on moral living and none on true doctrine would like to think that Paul had in mind some ugly immoral practice. However, in this instance he had reference to doctrine, i.e., "the resurrection is past already."

Notice also that both the teacher and the followers are rejected, i.e., "overthrow the faith of some." Hymeanaeus and Philetus were condemned and so were all who believed their doctrine. Jesus said, "If the blind guide the blind, both shall fall into the ditch." (Matt. 15:14). Paul warned of some who would "...Subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not." (Titus 1:10-11). (See also 2 Pet. 2:1-3). Thus, any who are holding to error are condemned whether they be instigator, promoter, or follower.

People who recognize error in the church of which they belong have a great responsibility. Eph. 5:11 says, "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." Titus 1:13-14 says, "Wherefore re-

buke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith; not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth." One cannot continue to have fellowship with those who are believing and practicing error. Instead, he has the responsibility to reprove and warn them. If one raises no voice of opposition, by silence he gives consent and thereby is also a partaker in iniquity.

How can one repent of an error while at the same time be a member of a church which believes and practices that error? For one to repent of an error, he must completely give up that error. As long as a person is a member of a church that has error, he is associated with error and is identified with error. Jesus said, "Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up." (Matt. 15:13). Those who are in a church that has error will be rooted up along with the others at the last day. Those who recognize error in the churches they are members of need to come out and be identified with the people of God.

It is important that we keep ourselves unspotted from the world, but it is equally important that we follow God's truth in our faith and practice. "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." (John 4:24). Abiding in the word of Jesus causes one to know the truth, and knowing and obeying the truth makes one free. Jesus said, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed, and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:31-32). The Hebrew writer said, "...He became the author of eternal salvation unto all that obey him." (Heb. 5:9). Therefore, let us steadfastly love, uphold and defend the truth, and let us denounce, reject and shun all error. "Buy the truth and sell it not." (Prov. 23:23). Credit: <http://oakridgechurch.com/riggs> ♦

The Voice of Truth

August 28, 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? ♦

"Now Ye Are Clean ..."
By Jarrod Jacobs

Jesus said, "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you" (Jn. 15:3). In the context of John 15, Jesus compares His Father to a "husbandman" (vinedresser, Jn. 15:1), and He compares Himself to the "true vine" from which the branches feed and grow. In a study of John 15:1-10, we learn that if we are "in Him," we will be clean, purged, and bear fruit. If we are not, then we will wither, and be cast "into the fire" and

"burned." Jesus taught that to bear much fruit brings glory to God (Jn. 15:8), and we show that we love Christ by doing His will (v. 10-14). John 15:15 states that Jesus calls those who are in Him "friends"; and because of our relationship with Christ, the world will hate us (Jn. 15:18-20).

It is evident that there are many things in this chapter

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for us to learn and apply. Yet, in this study, let us focus on the words of Christ in **John 15:3**.

How Is One Clean?

In studying **John 15:3**, we see that a more accurate translation of the verse is: *"Ye are already clean by reason of the word I have spoken to you."* Darby, the ASV, NKJ, NAS, and several other versions state the verse in this way. Therefore, this verse is discussing a disciple who has already become clean!

How did this one become clean? How does this person stay clean? Interestingly, the answer to both questions is: *"Through the word!"* For example, David asked, *"Wherewithal (how, JJ) shall a young man cleanse his way?"* The answer: *"By taking heed thereto according to thy word"* (**Ps. 119:9**). Men stand as filthy sinners before God (**Isa. 1:18**), but it is God's word that cleanses men. Peter said, *"Ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth..."* (**I Pet. 1:22**). It is God's word that tells us that baptism cleanses us (**I Pet. 3:21; Acts 22:16**). Therefore, when we take heed to the gospel, God's power to save (**Rom. 1:16**), we can become clean and stay clean!

Being Clean Implies We Have A New Relationship.

Notice the phrases Christ uses in **John 15** that describe a relationship: *"In me"* (6x); *"in you"* (2x); *"abide in me"* (3x); *"abide in the vine"*; *"without me"*; *"abide in you"*; and *"continue."* These things cannot be said of unclean people who are not in the vine, i.e., those who are not Christians, disciples cleansed from sin. Therefore, being cleansed also implies a relationship with Christ! One cannot be cleansed and not be in a relationship with Christ!

The Ephesians were shown this truth (**Eph. 2:11-13**). Therefore, *"in Christ"* we have blessings never before realized (**Eph. 1:3**). The world does not enjoy these blessings because they are not *"in Christ!"* Yes, God causes the sun to shine and the rain to fall upon the just and unjust (**Matt. 5:45**). However, spiritual blessings belong to a *"peculiar*

people, zealous of good works" (**Titus 2:14**).

Old-time preachers used to teach that faith changes the heart; repentance changes the lifestyle; confession changes the allegiance; and baptism changes the relationship. This is still true! Once cleansed, we have a relationship we could not have enjoyed previously.

Now That We Are Clean, We Must Stay Clean.

This cleansing is enjoyed as we abide in Christ, bearing fruit for Him. This is why we need to show concern for those who have fallen away (**Gal. 6:1**). Away (or apart) from Christ, there is no cleansing; there is no life; there is nothing (**Jn. 15:5-6**). One away from the Lord will die spiritually. Why? *"As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in me"* (**Jn. 15:4**). If we understand this concept with physical "vines" and "branches", should we not feel a great urgency toward the spiritual "branches" who need to return to the *"True vine"*?

The prescription for staying clean is evident in **John 15**. If one wishes to stay clean, he must:

- 1) Stay in Christ and bear fruit (**Jn. 15:2, 8**). Bearing "fruit" means bringing new converts to the Lord as well as bearing the *"fruit of the Spirit"* (**Gal. 5:22-23**).
- 2) Continue in Christ's love (**Jn. 15:9**). How does one do this? By keeping Christ's commandments (**Jn. 15:10**).
- 3) Be Christ's friend (**Jn. 15:13-15**).
- 4) Love one another (**Jn. 15:12, 17**).
- 5) Endure afflictions (**Jn. 15:18-20; II Tim. 2:13; I Pet. 4:16**).

Conclusion

Are you cleansed or not? Are you *"in Christ"* or not? Have you left the *"true vine,"* or do you need to be *"grafted in"* (**Rom. 11:17, 19**)? Don't delay from doing what you know is right. Tomorrow is too late (**II Cor. 6:2**)!

Credit: www.southside-churchofchrist.com ♦

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**). ♦

"Buy the Truth and Sell it Not"

By David J. Riggs

Satan has succeeded wonderfully in getting people to believe that the doctrine one believes has nothing to do with his eternal salvation. We often hear such statements as: "It is not doctrine that counts, but the way one lives," or "It matters not what one believes so long as he is sincere." Those who make such statements surely haven't analyzed them, and especially they haven't in the light of the holy Scriptures. The Bible clearly teaches that it does make a difference what one believes and practices.

LOVE THE TRUTH

We as Christians should give diligent study that we might be able to rightly divide the word of truth. We should not be foolish, but striving to understand what the will of the Lord is. In other words, we should be exercising our senses that we might be able to discern between good and evil, not being tossed to and fro and carried away with the error of men, but growing in grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Acceptable righteousness can be found only in the revealed word of God, the gospel. Paul said, *"I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek, for therein is the righteousness of God revealed..."* (**Rom. 1:16-17**). Righteousness is certainly not to be found in man's own wisdom. Man commits a grave error when he establishes his own righteousness. Paul further said, *"For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."* (**Rom. 10:3**).

God's praise is given throughout the Bible to those who believe and know the truth and his condemnation is upon all who have no love for truth. *"...They received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."* (**2 Thess. 2:9-12**). Thus, a love of truth is necessary in order to be saved.

UPHOLD THE TRUTH

If we will love the truth we will not only be willing to live in harmony with it, but we will be willing to uphold and

defend it. The apostle Paul praised the Philippians because they were partakers with him in the defense of the gospel. *"Even as it is meet to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace."* (**Phil. 1:7**). The word "defence" is the word "apologia" in the original and means "verbal defence, speech in defence" and involves "laboring to make good one's cause" (**Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon**, p. 65). Consequently, we should intensely struggle to maintain the purity of the faith. *"Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life..."* (**1 Tim. 6:12**).

The apostle Paul repeatedly admonished us to strive to uphold and maintain the truth (**2 Tim. 1:13**). If one does not hold to the sound words, he becomes destitute of the truth (**1 Tim. 6:3-4**). Involved in the responsibility of upholding the truth is the condemning of falsehood. When we mention "condemning falsehood," immediately many want to object and complain. They tell us it is wrong to condemn other religions. "Judge not that ye be not judged," they say. They seem to think this means we can do no judging at all. This cannot be true, for Jesus also said, *"Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment."* (**John 7:24**).

There are types of judging which are wrong, e.g., we should not judge the secret motives of another's heart (**1 Cor. 4:5**). We shouldn't judge others more harshly or severely than ourselves (the one mentioned above). We shouldn't judge when we are guilty of the same error (**Rom. 2:1**). Furthermore, there are types of judging which are right and must be done. Jesus said, *"Beware of false prophets which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits."* (**Matt. 7:15-16**). **1 John 4:1** says, *"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world."* (See also **Rom. 16:17-18**). These and other passages demand a judging of teachers. We are obligated to judge righteous judgment so that we can identify wolves in sheep's clothing and apostate groups.

Christians are often labeled "un-Christian" when they try to reprove falsehood in the religions about them, even when they try to do it in the mildest way they know how. Surely no one can object to our using the Lord's method of combating error. Jesus said, *"God said...but ye say."* (**Matt.**

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