



The Voice of Truth



May 27, 2012

"Is Christ Magnified In Your Life?"

By Jimmy Pettigrew

What do you do to a thing when you magnify it? The unthinking answer is, "You make it larger." But, a magnifying glass doesn't make the print larger. It improves your vision so that you see it more clearly and distinctly. Paul states that Christ would be magnified in his body. *"According to my earnest expectation and hope, that in nothing shall I be put to shame, but (that) with all boldness, as always, (so) now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether by life, or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain"* (**Philippians 1:20-21**). Christ would be magnified by Paul's life. The world would see Christ more clearly and distinctly. Paul would be Christ's magnifying glass for the whole world! Paul became more and more like Christ, and the world could see Christ living and walking in Paul's life.

Is Christ magnified in your life? The world is to see Christ revealed in His followers. He declared, *"As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world... Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven"* (**Matthew 5:14-16**). This is what is meant to magnify Christ! *"That ye may become blameless and harmless, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye are seen as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life . . ."* (**Philippians 2:15-16**).

The manner of life of the Christian will be either a real asset or a significant liability to the cause of Christ. The conduct of the Christian should "adorn" the doctrine of

God (**Titus 2:10**). "Adorn" means to beautify. The life of a faithful Christian reveals the beauty of God's will and way. *"For ye were once darkness, but are now light in the Lord: walk as children of light: (for the fruit of the light is in all goodness and righteousness and truth), proving what is well-pleasing unto the Lord"* (**Ephesians 5:8-10**).

The manner of life of the immoral or the indifferent member of the church is a stumbling block to others (**Romans 14:13**). The life of the faithful, dedicated Christian magnifies the Christ (**Philippians 1:20**). Christians are the epistles which the world reads before being introduced to those within the Bible. *"Ye are our epistle, written in our hearts, known and read (of all men; being made manifest that ye are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us . . ."* (**2 Corinthians 3:2-3**). By such epistles Christ is magnified to a skeptical world.

Do you magnify His obedient spirit (**Hebrews 5:8-9; John 14:15**)? Do you magnify His spirit of self-denial (**2 Corinthians 8:9; Luke 9:23**)? Would you preach that worship is incidental, Bible study is insignificant, giving is unimportant (**John 4:23; Hebrews 10:25; I Corinthians 16:1-2**)? What do you preach with your life? What kind of example of Christian living do you show?

You are the only gospel some people will read; the only sermon some will hear; and the only epistle some will accept! Jesus Christ should be magnified in the life of the Christians! ♦

Things That Impress Visitors

1. Members that day dream or sleep through 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. ♦

In This Issue...

Page 1 - "Is Christ Magnified In Your Life?"	Pages 3 to 4 - Giving God Your First and Best WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?
Page 1 - Things That Impress Visitors Pages 2 to 3 - "I Press ..."	Page 4 - Think About It! What Must I Do To Be Saved?

“I Press ...” By Jarrod Jacobs

One prominent characteristic of the gospel is the fact that it pushes and presses Christians forward so that they grow spiritually in this life. In the different Eastern religions, one works and presses until he reaches a certain point, a point of “clarity”, “peace”, etc.; and then, he has gone as far as he can go. The gospel, however, continues to push and press us while we live. There is no time while upon this earth that we can say that we know all about the Bible. Nor can we say we have done all that God expects of us. In fact, the more one learns what God would have us know in His word, the more one realizes that he does not know anything!

It has been said that if a Christian is standing still, he is actually going backwards! I believe that this is true. Let us study the words of three teachers from the Bible, and their encouragement to Christians to press, strain, and push forward in this life. Then let us make the application in our lives to “press”!!

Christ’s Words Of Encouragement:

Many have the attitude that being a Christian is a “spectator sport.” This is not the case! In Christ’s parables, we read of folks who had much to do! If one wants to please God, he cannot “sit on the sidelines”!

When Christ talked about the Kingdom, He compared it to a vineyard (**Matt. 20:1-16, 21:33-46**). Those who know about vineyards, know that this is the hardest form of agriculture that there is. A vineyard requires constant attention and care. In Zondervan’s Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible, there is an entry on vineyards which says, “A vineyard calls for harder and more regular labor than any other form of agriculture. Constant pruning of the vines is necessary if the clusters of grapes are to grow to full maturity” (Vol. 5, p. 882). It should be clear why our Lord compared the Kingdom to the most difficult form of agriculture. This is because being a Christian is not for the lazy! It is not for those who do not know how to work, but for the “worker” (**II Tim. 2:15**)!

In Christ’s words to the church at Smyrna, we read, “be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life” (**Rev. 2:10**). Matthew Henry explains this verse as, “... the life worn out in his service, or laid down in his cause, shall be rewarded with a much better life, which shall be eternal.” Christ’s emphasis is on one’s life being given in obedience to God. It is not enough to say you are a Chris-

tian; you must live as a Christian 365 days a year!

Paul’s Words Of Encouragement:

When the apostle Paul wrote to Christians in various parts of the world, he reminded them of their duties to Christ. He also declared that he was not exempt from obeying the Lord. He told the Corinthians: “Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified” (**I Cor. 9:24-27**).

In that same epistle, it is written, “Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain” (**I Cor. 15:58**). Let us define the words used by Paul. “Steadfast” “denotes seated, metaphorical of moral fixity” (Vine’s Amplified, p. 766). “Always” means, “everywhere, at all times” (Strong’s Hebrew/Greek Lexicon). “Abounding” means, “to superabound (in quantity or quality), be in excess, to cause to superabound or excel: increase” (Strong’s). “Work” means “toil (as an effort or occupation); by implication an act” (Strong’s). “Labour” means, “by implication pains: labour, + trouble, weariness” (Strong’s).

Therefore, when Paul wrote these brethren, he was telling them to be fixed morally, and everywhere and at all times they must toil painfully and struggle for the Lord. Yet, this was not a waste of time, but a wise use of their time and life because it was “in the Lord”. Remember, when the apostle Paul pressed and pushed Christians to be the best they could be, he was also doing this himself (**I Cor 9:27**)! When Paul wrote to Timothy, he told him that he had “fought the good fight” and expected Timothy to do the same (**II Tim. 4:7; I Tim. 6:12**).

Are we applying these lessons to ourselves? We had better do so! The gospel demands that we not let up, slow down, or give up. We must keep pressing! Again, the apostle Paul declared that this was his attitude. “Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to

Continued from Page Three, "I Press ..."

what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:13-14).

Peter's Words Of Encouragement:

As the apostle Peter wrote to the Christians "scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia" (I Pet. 1:1), he told them to grow. He reminded them that they had "purified [their] souls by [their] obedience to the truth..." (I Pet. 1:22). They were "born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God" (I Pet. 1:23). As a result, they were "newborn infants." He then told them to "long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation" (I Pet. 2:2).

I find it interesting that in Peter's final letter, the last

recorded words we have from his pen are words encouraging growth! He said, "But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen" (II Pet. 3:18).

Conclusion

Let us never get sedentary in our duties to the Lord. Let us continue to grow and mature spiritually, for this is what God expects of us. If our goal is Heaven, we must have our minds set on things above (Matt. 6:19-21; Col. 3:1-2). We must walk the strait and narrow way that leads to everlasting life (Matt. 7:14). This is a faithful life to God (Rev. 2:10; I Cor. 15:58). Therefore, let us "press" toward the goal and serve God faithfully in 2012!

Credit: www.southside-churchofchrist.com ♦

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 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 em-

Continued on Page Four

Continued from Page Three, "Giving God Your First and Best"

ployer/employee, the blessing of God is missing in our endeavors.

heard of men, can we say we are truly giving God our first and best? Hunger and thirst after God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength and all around you will benefit!

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 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

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 ♦

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

BETWEEN the atheist who would not dream of financially supporting the church and the Christian who will not financially support the Lord's church?

BETWEEN the skeptic who does not believe the Bible and the negligent Christian who never reads it?

BETWEEN those who do not believe in Bible classes and those who choose never to attend a class?

BETWEEN the atheist who does nothing to build up the Lord's church and the Christian who finds fault with others, but does nothing himself?

BETWEEN a man of the world, and a person in the church who lives like a man in the world?

BETWEEN a man of the world who lives for self and a person in the church who lives for self, not God?

These are tough questions for Christians who live in a tough world. The fact is, Christians make no difference until they are different. Again, **WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?** ♦

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

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

www.hillcrestchurchofchrist.com