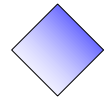


# The Voice of Truth



June 3, 2012

## “Stand Up For Jesus”

By Jimmy Pettigrew

Jesus is the one we should follow (**Revelation 14:4**); whose steps we should pursue (**1 Peter 2:21**). Jesus is the great pattern for everyone to follow (**Luke 9:43**). We all need to “Stand up for Jesus.” Why? He did no sin (**1 Peter 2:22**); He is the Lamb of God (**John 1:29**); He lives forever (**Revelation 1:18**). Salvation is in His name (**Acts 4:12**)! Eternal life is found in Him (**Romans 6:23**). All spiritual blessings are in Him (**Ephesians 1:3**). He tasted death for all mankind (**Hebrews 2:9**), and gave His life a ransom for many (**Matthew 20:28**). Truly the Lord is gracious (**1 Peter 2:3**). These are some of the reasons why we should stand up for Jesus, the perfect pattern that we should follow. Let us then think of the ways that we may stand up for Jesus.

We stand up for Jesus when we live as we should. We should never bring shame and disgrace upon the Lord’s name. The world points a finger of scorn at us and says that if that represents Christianity then it wants no part of it. We cause the good and honest people to stumble; we have set a bad example for others to follow. All of this hurts the cause of Christ. Remember the words of Paul, “Be ye imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ” (**1 Corinthians 11:1**). Christ wants us to do all in His name to His glory (**Colossians 3:17**). We need to magnify Christ (**Philippians 1:20**), so others can see Christ living in us (**Galatians 2:20**). The manner of life of the Christian is “becoming” to the gospel (**Philippians 1:27**). The life of the Christian can adorn or beautify the teaching of Christ (**Titus 2:10**). The life of the faithful, dedicated Christian magnifies the doctrine of Christ and glorifies the Father (**Matthew 5:16**).

We stand up for Jesus when we develop and grow as Christians (**2 Peter 3:18**). There is no greater question to the sincere Christian than “Am I Growing?” Have I been growing in the past? Am I growing now? Am I becoming more of what God and Christ would have me to be? Yet, it is a recognized fact that many Christians are not growing. The Christian grows or dies spiritually. “For when by reason of the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need again that some one teach you the rudiments of the first

*principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of solid food. For every one that partaketh of milk is without experience of the word of righteousness; for he is a babe. But solid food is for full-grown men, (even) those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern good and evil”* (**Hebrews 5:12-14**). To grow spiritually we must desire spiritual milk of God’s Word (**1 Peter 2:1-3**). To stand up for Jesus we must grow and know the Book, so we will be able to defend it (**Jude 3**).

We stand up for Jesus when we use our talents for the cause of Christ. The Lord has given responsibility to every servant. This responsibility is to use our talent in which God has given us. Therefore, each does not have the same degree of responsibility. We can see this idea in the “Parable of the Talents” (**Matthew 25:13 ff**). We do not have the same degree of responsibility, but each must be faithful (**1 Corinthians 4:2**)! God does not require me to be great, but God does require me to be faithful. Because in this parable these servants were judged on their faithfulness (**Matthew 25:21, 23**). Small ability does not justify a lack of faithfulness! “Will a man rob God?” (**Malachi 3:8**). God always requires the same faithfulness. Some have greater obligation, some lesser, but each must be faithful. God always demands our best. Let us not be like the one talent man, who had the idea of just barely making it, “Woe to them that are at ease in Zion” (**Amos 6:1**).

May the Lord help us to have more faith, love, zeal, courage and determination to take a stand for Jesus Christ and for the truth! Remember God is counting on you!

No matter what others are doing, my friend,  
or what they are leaving undone,  
God’s counting on you to keep on with the job  
’til the very last battle is won.

He’s counting on you to be faithful;  
He counting on you to be true.

Yes, others may work, or others may shirk,  
but remember - God is counting on you. ♦

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## "Does It Matter What I Believe?"

By Jarrod Jacobs

Many ask this question in reference to religious matters. Some will try to say that it does not matter what we believe as long as we are honest and sincere about religious issues. Let us look to the Bible and see the consequences of that reasoning.

If, in religion, it does not matter what you and I believe, why did God say, *"Thou shalt have no other gods before me"* (Ex. 20:3)? Why did God not allow those Jews to worship the "god of their choice"? Isn't it possible that there were some Canaanites and heathens that were sincere and honest in their infant sacrifices, mutilation of their bodies, and other forms of "worship" to their gods? Yet, God did not allow such a thing (Josh. 24:20). Why would that be unless God expected worship to be to Him and Him alone, no excuses and no exceptions?

If, in religion, it does not matter what you and I believe, why did Jesus condemn the Pharisees and the Sadducees for their behavior? Let us notice **Matthew 15:9**. There Jesus said, *"But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."* Does this sound like Jesus does not care how we worship him? Is there a possibility that some may believe that they are truly worshipping God, but in reality it is *"in vain"*? Yes!

Another passage we ought to look at is found in **Matthew 22:29**. Jesus condemned the Sadducees at this time, and said, *"Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God."* How could these people "err" if it does not matter what you and I believe on religious matters?

Let us look at an early teacher and preacher of the gospel. A man by the name of Stephen. This space will not allow us to print the entire text, but please read **Acts 7** so you can understand the entire context. Toward the end of **Acts 7**, Stephen condemns the Jews for refusing to believe that Jesus is the Son of God, and the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. Please notice what happened, *"When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth...And cast him out of the city, and stoned him"* (Acts 7:54, 58). Does this reaction sound consistent with people who have heard words to the effect, "I'm O.K. and you're O.K. – There are many roads to the same goal"?

Many times, Paul would cause a riot in the cities he visited. Why was this? This was because he taught **THE gospel of Christ** (Rom. 1:16)!! He taught that there was

not another gospel of Christ. Therefore, you will follow the one true gospel, or a perverted gospel, period (**Gal. 1:6-9**). Paul caused a stir among the Philippians because he was accused of teaching *"customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans"* (Acts 16:21). Does this sound like Paul taught that there are "many ways to serve God"? In Ephesus Paul, *"hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands"* (Acts 19:26). Why would he say this to such an honest and sincere group of people who were just trying to worship their goddess the best way they knew how? How do we know that these people were honest and sincere in their beliefs about the goddess Diana? For one thing, they shouted *"Great is Diana of the Ephesians"* for two solid hours to show their devotion to that idol (Acts 19:34). Paul did not teach these things in Ephesus alone, but everywhere that Paul went he taught the same gospel (Acts 19:26; I Cor. 4:17).

If it is true that God will accept you as long as you are honest and sincere in what you believe, then why was Paul converted in the first place? He was the epitome of an "honest and sincere," "religious" person, fully persuaded in his own mind (Acts 22:3, 23:1, 26:9-10; Gal, 1:13-14; Phil. 3:4-6). But it was not enough, was it??

My friend, what we believe religiously, matters! What we believe concerning religious matters will determine whether we go to Heaven or Hell! This is how serious it is. We are not on "different roads to the same goal"! Now, we may be on different roads, but rest assured that one road leads to Heaven and the other road leads to Hell (**Matt. 7:13-14**). These are our choices!! When people declare that it does not matter what you believe as long as you are honest and sincere, they are teaching something completely foreign to the Scriptures. We must follow what the Bible and the Bible alone says on matters of religion, as well as in every other area of our life (**Col. 3:17**)!! If people will not give us book, chapter, and verse for their actions, we need not listen (**I Pet. 4:11**). The next time someone asks the question "Does it matter what I believe religiously...?" How will **YOU** answer them??

Credit: [www.southside-churchofchrist.com](http://www.southside-churchofchrist.com) ♦

## And Satan Also Came Among Them

By Johnie Edwards

"Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also among them" (**Job 1:6**). Satan never passes up an opportunity to do his work. He came among the twelve apostles. "Then entered Satan into Judas surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve" (**Luke 22:3**). Satan can do his work more effectively when he comes among people. I would like for us to notice some instances when Satan came among people and to notice some applications.

He came among Adam and Eve in the garden. After God had placed man in the garden of Eden with the responsibility of dressing and keeping the garden and with the restriction of not eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil lest death come, Satan came among them and said, "Ye shall not surely die" (**Gen. 3:4**). Anytime God makes His will known to man, Satan is there to tell man the very opposite.

Satan came when Christ was baptized. The baptism of Jesus is recorded in **Matthew 3:13-16**. "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil" (**Matthew 4:1**). Surely the devil does not pass up the opportunity of coming among those who have just been baptized. He tries to make them concerned with the cares of this life. He sets them to criticizing instead of hearing to profit. He tries to cool down their ardor, abate their love, chill their praise, freeze their prayers and kill their zeal. Satan likes a "sleeping church." It's his business to rock the cradle, hush all noise and drive away even a fly which might light upon the sleeper's face.

Satan comes when the Gospel of Christ is preached. In the parable of the sower, Satan is pictured as coming among the wayside hearers. "Those by the wayside are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved" (**Luke 8:12**). Satan comes among people whenever the gospel is being preached and tries to steal the word away. He tries to get folks to question the way of God. For he knows that, "They that gladly received his word were baptized..." (**Acts 2:41**).

Satan came among Ananias and Sapphira. Ananias and Sapphira sold a possession. Then Satan came among them. "But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?" (**Acts 5:3**). When Christians get ready to give to the Lord's work, what better time for Satan to come among them? If he can get us to think the Lord's work is not very important and that we can get by without giving very much, then Satan has us going his way.

Satan comes about when the truth is preached about the name we must wear. When it is pointed out that we must wear the name Christian, (**Acts 11:26, 26:28; 1 Peter 4:16**), Satan comes among people and tells them, "There is nothing in a name." Many believe him.

Satan comes when the truth is preached about the church. When people are taught that they must be a member of the Lord's church to be saved, (**Acts 2:47; Ephesians 5:23**), Satan comes among them and says, "One church is just as good as another." Many are deceived.

Satan comes when the truth is preached about the plan of salvation. When men are taught to hear the word, have faith, repent of their sins, confess their faith, be baptized and live a faithful life, (**Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38**), Satan comes among them and says, "You don't have to be to be baptized to be saved." Many take his advice.

We need to constantly be on guard against Satan. "...for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as ministers of righteousness..." (**2 Corinthians 11:14-15**).

Lest Satan come among us and deceive us, let us remember the advice given by Peter, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour." (**1 Peter 5:8**). Credit: [www.moodychurchofchrist.com](http://www.moodychurchofchrist.com) ♦

### Can You Imagine?

1. **Paul saying:** "You don't have to obey the gospel to be saved?" Read **2 Thessalonians 1:7-9**.
2. **Paul saying:** "We are sprinkled with him in baptism?" Read **Romans 6:4**.
3. **Jude saying:** "I don't think it is right to argue the scriptures?" Read **Jude 3**. ♦

## BAPTISM - URGENT AND ESSENTIAL

By David Riggs

In New Testament times people were baptized as soon as they heard the gospel and had faith in Christ (**Acts 2:41; 8:35-39; 16:30-34**). There were no postponements or delays; there was no such thing as waiting for a "baptismal day." It was always "straightway," "the same day," "the same hour of the night," etc. They thought baptism was urgent and essential.

Furthermore, the inspired men of the New Testament did not take baptism lightly. They never poked fun at it saying, "There's no power in the water," neither did they accuse some of trusting in "water salvation." They taught that Jesus made atonement for sin in His death, and they commanded all to believe, repent, and be baptized in order to receive the benefits of His death (**Rom. 6:3-4**). They viewed baptism as an act of faith in and submission to Jesus Christ, the Savior, who has all authority (**Matt. 28:18-20**).

All would freely admit that there is no power in the water of baptism. The power is of the Lord. Jesus healed a blind man by anointing his eyes and saying, "Go wash in the pool of Siloam." (**John 9:6-7**). The blind man did not object by saying, "There is no power in the water." He knew that the power was of the Lord and he needed to obey to receive the blessing. Likewise, there is no power in the water of baptism, but one must go to the water to receive the blessing. To be cleansed of leprosy, Naaman was told, "Go and wash in Jordan seven times..." (**2 Kings 5:10**). There was no power in the water of Jordan, but if Naaman had not obeyed, he would not have been cleansed. Similarly, if one does not obey in baptism, he will not be

cleansed.

One is not lost just because he is not baptized. He is lost because he is a sinner. If someone who can't swim falls into a lake and a boat is sent, but he won't get into the boat, is he drowning because he won't get into the boat? No, he is drowning because he is in the water. Likewise, one is not lost just because he is not baptized, but because he is in sin. Just as the boat is the means of rescue and one must get into it, the gospel is the means of salvation and must be obeyed (baptism included) to rescue from sin.

Who has the right today to label baptism as "non-essential" or in anyway minimize any of the commands of Christ? Aren't all of the commands of the Lord essential? He said, "Why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do the things which I say?" (**Luke 6:46**). As Lord, He has the right to make baptism an important step in the plan. He is the Savior and His will must become our's. He is the "author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him." (**Heb. 5:9**).

If when baptized, you put one Christ (**Gal. 3:27**), wash away sins (**Acts 22:16**), have remission of sins (**Acts 2:38**), are saved (**Mark 16:16**), benefit from Christ's death (**Rom. 6:3-4**), enter the body of Christ (**1 Cor. 12:13**), what is your condition without baptism? Why not repent and be immersed in the name of Christ for the remission of sins? Let no man deceive you. Humbly obey the gospel today.

Credit: <http://oakridgechurch.com/riggs> ♦

*Truth is truth even if no one believes it.  
Error is error if everyone believes it.*

*If a hypocrite is between you and God,  
He must be closer to God than you are.*

### 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](http://www.hillcrestchurchofchrist.com)**