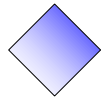


# The Voice of Truth



March 3, 2013

## That's Just Your Interpretation!

By Jimmy Pettigrew

That's just your interpretation! Think for a moment. How many times do we hear this statement when talking about God's Word with people! We talk about baptism for the remission of sins that is just your interpretation! That instrumental music in worship is sinful, that is just your interpretation, you've got your view of what the passage means and I've mine!

What do people usually mean when they say this statement: That's just your interpretation? They mean you've got your belief, your opinion, your feelings, what a certain passage means and I've got mine, and who's to say mine's wrong and yours is right? Nevertheless, the Bible portrays a completely different picture.

Every responsible individual can understand the Bible. God has given us a written revelation with the understanding that it can be correctly comprehended. This means that for every teaching, there is a meaning that God originally intended to convey. For the Bible, when understood, is a perfect unity. It yields the same message and truths to every man when it is understood. It is our task to ascertain that one correct interpretation. There's only one such interpretation to any given passage, the right one, God's view! All men are capable of understanding the Bible. *"If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself"* (John 7:17). We could not conceive of our God being so devoid of love and consideration as to give to men a book which he must understand and whose commandments he must obey to have eternal life and then to withhold from man the faculty for understanding the Bible correctly. God made it clear we can arrive at the proper view. Jesus said, *"You shall know the truth . . ."* (John 8:32). In this statement the Lord clearly says that it is possible for us to know truth, and know that we know it. *"But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord"* (Jer. 9:24). We are not to be agnostic

and unsure. We are to be confident and believing. Paul said, *"Now I beseech you brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment"* (1 Cor. 1:10). We are to be of one mind (2 Cor. 13:11). If we are made to see the Bible differently how can we be perfectly joined together in the same mind, one mind? Peter said, *"If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God"* (1 Peter 4:11). He who speaks as the oracles of God is unquestionably bound to speak not only the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27), but also only that which is authorized by God's Word. These things we must speak (Titus 2:15)! Paul said, *"rightly divide (handle aright) the word of truth"* (2 Tim. 2:15). Notice that all these passages are based upon the preconception that individuals can, with proper study and rational reasoning, arrive at the conclusions that God intended to deliver.

So, there's NO such thing as my interpretation and your interpretation! There is only God's meaning, and with diligent, logical study we can arrive at the truth on any subject that is vital to our spiritual well-being. This is possible when all proposing to serve the Christ confined their speaking to the oracles of God (1 Peter 4:11), recognizing only the Word as authority (2 Tim. 3:16-17), be about the business of studying and searching God's book (Acts 17:11; 1 Thess. 5:21). We need to study the Bible with the determination to know what it teaches, making an honest search to determine if we really do have the truth. What is God's meaning of this passage, what is God saying? When we find truth, it should be accepted and obeyed! We must cautiously refrain from misinterpreting and misusing Scripture (2 Cor. 4:2; 2 Peter 3:16). We must take heed how we hear (Luke 8:18), and make certain our hearts are genuinely receptive to the truth (Luke 8:15). The Bible must be our standard of righteousness; any other standard is false (Gal. 1:6-8). Unless we refrain from elevating human opinion above the faith, the Gospel, we will never see God's

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meaning! *"Now these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes; that in us ye might learn not (to go) beyond the things which are written" (1 Cor. 4:6).*

So, there is no such thing as your interpretation and my interpretation! We can be certain of our ability to come to the knowledge of the truth **(1 Tim. 2:3-4)**. •

## **"An Inaccurate Statement"** By Jarrod Jacobs

A quote recently crossed my desk that got my attention. The quote was written by a man named Ronny Wade of Missouri on Monday, 2/18/13. Ronny Wade is a well-known preacher among those who believe that one must use only one container for passing the fruit of the vine in the observance of the Lord's Supper. He said: "If those people who spend their time talking about church trouble would visit the sick, help the poor, and encourage the down-trodden, there might be less church trouble."

What do you think of this statement? At first glance, it sounds good. Who would deny that we need more people showing concern for the sick, poor, and down-trodden? I won't deny this. Helping the sick, poor, and down-trodden is a definite need in this world **(Jas. 1:26-27)**. Yet, upon closer examination, we see Mr. Wade's statement is inaccurate. Why do I say this? It is because he is pitting those who discuss church trouble against those who are helping the sick, poor, and down-trodden. Could not a person do both of these things? Mr. Wade seems to be implying that it is an "either/or" situation and those who speak of church troubles are in fact, part of the problem.

I deny that his statement is true. This is because the contrast between helping the poor, sick, etc., and speaking out about church trouble is inaccurate. I wish to prove this in a few ways. First, let us pretend that all people did what Mr. Wade suggests. If brethren stopped speaking about church troubles and only helped the sick, the poor, and down-trodden, would this bring all "church trouble" to an end? If we stopped speaking and warning folks, would this cause all problems to cease or at least decrease? What do you think? In contrast to the wisdom of men, I remember God telling Ezekiel, *"So you, son of man, I have made a watchman for the house of Israel. Whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me. If I say to the wicked, O wicked one, you shall surely die, and you do not speak to warn the wicked to turn from his way, that wicked person shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand. But if you warn the wicked to turn from his way, and he does not turn from his way, that person shall die in his iniquity, but you will have delivered your soul" (Ezek. 33:7-9)*. In addition

to this, God told Isaiah, *"Cry aloud; do not hold back; lift up your voice like a trumpet; declare to my people their transgression, to the house of Jacob their sins" (Isa. 58:1)*. Please notice the emphasis in the books of Ezekiel and Isaiah. In both books, this was God's chance to tell the prophets to focus on the poor, the sick, and the down-trodden. Yet, what did God tell the prophets to do **(II Pet. 1:20-21)**? Was God more worried about "trouble" than about those in need? What do you think?

According to Mr. Wade's quote, a prophet like Elijah was wrong for speaking against that troubler, Ahab. Elijah didn't know any better than to condemn Ahab for his sin and then say it will not rain again until he said so **(I Kings 17:1)**! He later condemned the 450 prophets of Baal and killed them **(I Kings 18)**. Why did he not go to the poor and down-trodden in Israel instead of speaking out against the one who had "troubled" Israel, Ahab **(I Kings 18:18)**?

When we look into the New Testament, we read where the apostle Paul said he warned the Christians in Ephesus about false teachers *"night and day with tears" (Acts 20:31)*. Should the elders at Ephesus have admonished Paul to quit speaking about trouble they would face and get busy visiting the sick?

Notice Peter's concern for the brethren in **II Peter 2**. He said, *"But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of truth will be blasphemed. And in their greed they will exploit you with false words. Their condemnation from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep" (II Pet. 2:1-3)*. Here is an apostle speaking of trouble coming as a result of false teachers among the Christians, and then sending this letter to the Christians around the world **(II Pet. 1:1)**. Why couldn't he just spend time with the down-trodden instead of writing about false teachers and their trouble?

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Again, we see where the apostle Paul warned Timothy about those who will "depart from the faith" (I Tim. 4:1). He also warned Timothy of the false teaching of "Phygelus and Hermogenes" (II Tim. 1:15), "Hymenaeus and Philetus" (2:17), men who opposed the truth like "Jannes and Jambres" did to Moses (3:8), and "Alexander the Copersmith" (4:14). Why did he do this? Why name these people? Why waste ink like this when he could have been using his ink to offer instructions on helping the poor?

After studying these Bible examples of the work of the prophets and apostles, were these men wrong for what they did? Should they have stopped speaking of "trouble" so they could focus on the sick, poor, and downtrodden? Or, were they actually DOING their job because by sounding these warnings, the *spiritually* sick were given the

needed spiritual medicine; the *spiritually* poor were assisted, and the *spiritually* down-trodden were lifted (I Thess. 5:14; Heb. 12:12-13)? Think about it!

By writing this article, am I trying to discourage compassion toward the physically sick, poor, or down-trodden? By no means! Let us have our eyes open to those who have physical problems, and let us look to find ways to encourage and help them through those problems (Gal. 6:10; Jas. 1:27; Matt. 22:39; etc.). The point I am trying to make is that it is not an "either/or" proposition with God. In truth, *both* must be done! Let us look for ways to encourage and lift up those having problems, and let us also sound the warnings when there are problems in the church that rear their ugly heads! To ignore one or the other is to be negligent in our work and duty for the Lord.

Credit: The Old Paths - 2/24/13 ♦

## The church of Christ

### Has:

- One Builder – Jesus Christ (Matt. 16:18; Eph. 3:9-11)
- One Purchaser – Jesus Christ (Acts 20:28)
- One Head – Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:22-23)
- One Savior – Jesus Christ (Eph. 5:23)
- One destiny – eternal salvation (Eph. 5:23)

### IS:

- The spiritual body of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23; 5:23)
- The kingdom of Christ (Matt. 16:18-19; Heb. 12:28)
- The depository of those saved (Acts 2:47)
- One body, not many bodies (Eph. 4:4; 1:22-23)
- One way to be added to the church:
- One must believeth that Christ is the Son of God (Jno. 8:24)
- One must repent of sins (Lk. 13:3)
- One must confess that Christ is the Son of God (Rom. 10:9-10)
- One must be baptized into Christ (Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38; Gal. 3:26-27) ♦

## 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?** ♦

## "Show Me Your Faith..." By Jonathan L. Perz

In exposing the folly of the idea of faith without works, James writes, "Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, 'You have faith, and I have works.' Show me your faith without your works and I will show you my faith by my works" (James 2:17-18). Could not the same challenge be directed toward many professing Christianity today?

Do our works match our professed faith in Christ Jesus?

In one sense perhaps we could argue that they do. You see, despite the inspired teachings of Jesus, many have chosen to go their own way and subscribe to man's doctrines instead of putting their faith in the word of God (Rom. 10:17). For instance, many who profess a faith in Christ Jesus ardently oppose the idea that baptism (immersion in water) is necessary for salvation. Jesus plainly said it is necessary (Mark 16:15-16; Matt. 28:18-20). His apostles plainly practiced it as necessary (Acts 2:38; 1 Pet. 3:21, et al). So, those who do not believe that

baptism is necessary are showing their faith by their works. Their faith is clearly in something other than the teachings of Jesus Christ and His inspired apostles.

On the other hand, many who say they have faith and who have been baptized also demonstrate their faith by their works, or lack thereof. Paul instructed Titus that "our people also learn to maintain good works" (Tit. 3:8, 14). He also stated we should always abound in the work of the Lord (1 Cor. 15:58), works which we were created for (Eph. 2:10). This is an unfortunate testimony on the status of faith in our day.

So, not only has the faith of many been rendered vain by the false teaching of men, the faith of others has been rendered dead by the absence of works to demonstrate their faith.

Don't just talk about your faith! Show your faith! Prove that your faith is indeed in Him and not in men!

Credit: www.moodychurchofchrist.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). ♦

### 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**