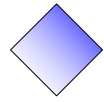


The Voice of Truth



June 2, 2013

Reprove, Rebuke! By Jimmy Pettigrew

The apostle Paul said, *“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine”* (2 Timothy 4:2). Likewise he said, *“And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them”* (Ephesians 5:11). *“Them that sin reprove in the sight of all, that the rest also may be in fear”* (1 Timothy 5:20). At times I wonder if some have even read these passages. There are those who are disgusted, displeased and offended by sound gospel preaching. **REPROVE** implies that one is in error and needs arguments presented to convince him/her of the truth. **REBUKE** implies that one must be warned of wrong doing. There is a trend to believe that the possibility of offending someone in preaching the Bible is to be avoided. We are to **PREACH THE WORD**, not to pamper the world. We are to **REPROVE** and **REBUKE**, not relax, approve and exonerate sin! We hear such remarks as: “none of us are perfect”; “you’ll drive them away”; “we don’t want to make anyone mad,” or “that will split the church.” There is an attitude that has crept into the church to abolish, banish and expel **REPROVING** and **REBUKING** from our message. Some say, “Instead of emphasizing these things, why not focus on God’s grace and mercy? You can love them into righteousness instead of badgering them into it. Just briefly touch on their sins.” But Solomon said, *“It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise, than for a man to hear the song of fools”* (Ecclesiastes 7:5).

Today we hear comments such as “don’t rock the boat,” and “it will tear the congregation apart if you preach on that.” Many preachers, elders and members are afraid to take a strong stand to help the congregation see the need to break, shatter and smash sin out of the camp. God did not allow His people of Israel to continue in sin because He was afraid of stirring up a hornet’s nest. Preachers, elders and members today should be the same! The Lord desires His church to be pure (Ephesians 5:27). Christians are to put off sin (Colossians 3:8), and the word from which put off is translated signifies moving out and away from. It is unthinkable that Christ will own

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His bride if she becomes unchaste plays the harlot and has her affections taken away from Christ.

Paul told the elders from Ephesus, *“Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declared unto you all the counsel of God”* (Acts 20:26-27). Paul is saying in these verses that we have the charge to point out a brother’s sin (Galatians 6:1; James 5:19-20). Failure to purge out sin leads to a toleration of sin. Toleration of sin leads to a love of sin. The love of sin leads to spiritual death (Romans 6:23). This, Christ will NOT tolerate! Instead of tolerating sin, we are to **REPROVE** it (Ephesians 5:11). Reprove members who feel they don’t need to meet with the saints; reprove the members who are living in adultery; reprove members who dress ungodly; rebuke members who belong to the Masonic Lodge; rebuke members who drink alcoholic beverages. If a congregation permits impure individuals to remain unchastened within its fellowship, it thereby becomes a partaker of their sin and will destroy the whole body (Revelation 2:1-5). When we cover up sin in the church, we corrupt the morality and virtue of the church and destroy its ability to honor God or to save men. Sin must be exposed and purged out of the church or the church will become corrupt and a synagogue of Satan instead of the church of Christ. Such loving action is commanded by Christ (Matthew 18:17; 2 Thessalonians 3:6). To expose sin, error and false teachers is to proclaim to the world that the church seeks truth, purity, holiness and godliness, and to protect the church from their influence (1 Corinthians 5:6). ♦

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What Does It Mean: Believe on the Lord?

By Jonathan L. Perz

The book of Acts, which is a record of the beginnings of the church, accounts the conversion of several of the early Christians. In one such account, Luke records for us the conversion of the Philippian jailor (**Acts 16:25-34**). A study of this account reveals to us what it means to believe on the Lord Jesus.

In today's religious world, many teach that belief is merely "accepting Jesus into your heart," "saying a sinner's prayer," or "mentally acknowledging Jesus as your Lord and Savior." While these teachings may appear sound, they miss the Bible mark of belief by utilizing a watered-down concept of belief!

Truly, belief is more than simply acknowledging the Lord as existing (cf. **James 2:19** — where the demons believed). It goes even further than saying Jesus is your Lord and Savior (cf. **Luke 6:46** — which many say). The truth is that Bible belief constitutes trusting and obeying the Lord. The wise man wrote, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths" (**Proverbs 3:5-6**). This defines Bible belief. It constitutes not only trusting in and acknowledging Him, but letting His ways become your ways. This is how God directs our paths. Let's illustrate this further with the example of the Philippian jailor.

After experiencing just a taste of the wondrous works of God, the jailer asks the timeless and pointed question, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" (**Acts 16:30**). There is no mistaking the crux of his inquiry. He is asking the most important question any man can ask in his life—he wants to know how to go to heaven. This is exactly what we seek today!

Now, notice the answer Paul and Silas give him. They say, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household" (**Acts 16:31**). If one stops reading here, the doctrine that says we are saved by "faith alone," meaning belief alone, seems true. All we would have to do is believe on the Lord Jesus and we would be saved. However, the account does not stop here. Thus, we cannot stop reading here, or we will find ourselves guilty of taking this crucial passage out of its context and fail to discover how one believes on the Lord.

Luke goes on to record how Paul and Silas "spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his

house" (**Acts 16:32**). What were the Philippian jailor and his household to believe, unless of course, Paul and Silas preached the gospel to them (cf. **Romans 10:14-17**)? If not, they could not believe, because they would not have known what to believe! So, there is more than simply believing involved in salvation—the jailor and his household heard the word.

We then learn that after this was done, the Philippian jailor "took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes...and immediately he and all his family were baptized" (**Acts 16:33**). Here, the jailor did exactly what Peter commanded of those first Christians on the Day of Pentecost (**Acts 2:36 ff**). The jailor repented of his sins and was baptized (**Acts 2:38**)! Yet, this brings forth some interesting questions for us to consider.

Where did the jailor and his household hear about baptism? They must have heard it from the word of the Lord Paul and Silas spoke to them. We see a similar account earlier in this chapter. Luke tells us Lydia was also baptized after her heart was opened to heed the things spoken by Paul (**Acts 16:14-15**). Evidently, the saving message of the gospel includes instruction regarding baptism (cf. **Acts 8:36-38** — the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch).

The Lord, after giving the great commission, says, "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe, will be condemned" (**Mark 16:15-16**). While some of those who teach belief only have denied this verse by emphasizing the second half of it, we cannot ignore the whole of Jesus' teaching. He said to "believe and be baptized." Indeed, there is more to salvation than belief only.

Consider Matthew's account of the great commission. "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always even to the end of the age" (**Matthew 28:19-20**). How is it that one is made a disciple—by belief only? No! When they are baptized? Yes! Are not Paul and Silas simply fulfilling the great commission in the case of the Philippian jailor?

However, if more proof is needed, further proof can be provided from this very same context. Luke continues this

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account saying, "Now when he had brought them into his house, he set food before them; and rejoiced, having believed in God with all of his household" (**Acts 16:34**). The same Greek word for belief prescribed in verse 31, prior to the jailor's salvation, has now been fulfilled in verse 34. The jailor could rejoice in his salvation and in the fellowship he now shares with Christ, having believed (cf. **Romans 6:3-8**). Likewise, we see the same type of thing in the account of Lydia earlier in the chapter. She heeds the things spoken by Paul, which included baptism. She then gives Paul and company a crucial imperative, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay" (**Acts 16:15**). We know Paul and company stayed, as Luke records, "So, she persuaded us." Indeed,

Paul and company, by staying in her home, showed that they found her faithful to the Lord. This is further testimony that baptism, which we know to be for the remission of sins (**Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16**), is an inseparable part of God's eternal plan of salvation (cf. **1 Peter 3:21; Galatians 3:26-27**).

Clearly, based on the account of the Philippian jailor in its entirety, we can be certain that Bible belief constitutes more than belief only, as some teach. The jailor heard the word of God, repented of his sins, and was baptized for the remission of his sins. Only after these things were fulfilled, does God's inspired word record him as having believed. Indeed, let God's word be true and all who teach otherwise be found liars. *Credit: www.moodychurchofchrist.com ♦*

"Does It Matter What I Believe?"

By Jarrod Jacobs

Many ask this question in reference to religious matters. A large number of people in our society try to say that it does not matter what we believe so long as we are honest and sincere about religious issues. Is this true? Let us study the Bible and see the consequences of one reasoning that is does not matter what we believe so long as we are sincere.

If it does not matter what we believe just as long as we are sincere people, then why did Jesus condemn the Pharisees while He was on earth? Let us read **Matthew 15:9**. There Jesus said, "*In vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.*" Does this sound like Jesus does not care how we worship him? How is it possible to worship "in vain" if it doesn't matter what we believe? Further, in **Matthew 22:29**, Jesus condemned the Sadducees, telling them, "*You are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures, nor the power of God.*" How can Christ say that people are "wrong" 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 was the fulfillment of all Old Testament proph-

ecy (**v. 51-53**). Please notice what happened, "*When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth ... They cast him out of the city and stoned him*" (**Acts 7:54, 58**). Does this sound like the reaction of a people who heard a sermon suggesting that it doesn't matter what we believe so long as we are sincere in what we do?

We could add to this study by relating the various reactions of people who heard the apostle Paul preach. The Bible shows us that he was run out of Antioch in Pisidia, stoned at Lystra, run out of Thessalonica, and Berea as well (**Acts 13:50, 14:19, 17:10, 13-14**). These are but a few examples, and more of Paul's suffering is recorded for us in **II Corinthians 11:23-28**. Please note the responses to Paul and when they came. This is not the reaction of folks hearing, "I'm OK and you are OK," or "It doesn't matter what we believe"! Instead, we know he preached the gospel and the gospel only (**Gal. 1:6-12; Rom. 1:16; I Cor. 2:2, 5**).

My friend, what we believe matters! What we believe will determine whether we go to Heaven or Hell (**Jn. 8:24**)! This is how serious it is. When people declare that it does not matter what you believe as long as you are honest and sincere, they are saying something completely foreign to the Scriptures. *Credit: The Old Paths - 5/27/12 ♦*

THINK! THINK! THINK!

What sort of church would the Lord's church be if every member were just like me? ♦

Are You Heaven Bound? By David J. Riggs

It matters not what else you do in life, if you miss heaven you have been a complete failure. You might gather about you great riches and fame and leave thousands of friends to mourn your departing, but if you are not ready for heaven you have been a miserable failure. On the other hand, you may die in a charity home for the poor and be buried in a potter's field without a single friend to mourn, but if you receive heaven, your life has been a marvelous success.

You can't afford to miss heaven for if you miss it, you miss all. It is the place of eternal rest (**Heb. 4:9-11**) where pain, sickness, and death will not be known (**Rev. 21:4**). It is an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that does not fade away (**1 Pet. 1:4**). It is that city built by the living God (**Heb. 11:10**).

You don't have to miss heaven. Humbly submit yourself

to the will of God (**Matt. 7:21**). Let His Word guide you (**2 Tim. 3:15**) and let no one beguile you or your reward (**Col. 2:18**). Overcome temptations (**James 1:12**) and suffer for His cause with rejoicing (**Matt. 5:11-12**). If you do these things, heaven will be yours someday for the God of heaven who cannot lie has promised it.

I quote a few words from some of our songs: "I am going to a city where the streets with gold are laid, where the tree of life is blooming, and the roses never fade. Here they bloom but for a season, soon their beauty is decayed; I am going to a city where the roses never fade." "I am bound for the promised land, promised land, I am bound for the promised land; O who will come and go with me? I am bound for the promised land." "When we've been there ten thousand years, bright shining as the sun; we've now less days to sing God's praise than when we first begun."

Credit: oakridgechurch.com/riggs ♦

The Nature Of The Kingdom Of God

IS NOT

1. Of This World (**John 18:36**).
2. Eating and Drinking (**Rom. 14:17**).
3. In Word (**1 Cor. 4:20**).
4. With Observation (**Luke 17:20**).

IS

1. In Power (**1 Cor. 4:20**).
2. Righteousness (**Rom. 14:17**).
3. Peace (**Rom. 14:17**).
4. Joy (**Rom. 14:17**).
5. Within You (**Luke 17:21**).
6. Unshakable (**Heb. 12:28**). ♦

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**

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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