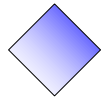


# The Voice of Truth



July 14, 2013

## You're A Legalist! By Jimmy Pettigrew

I have often been branded as a legalist. I have often heard my brethren being called by such an expression. Why are we recognized by some by this term? What do they mean when they call us by such a name? What precisely does it mean when they taint you as being legalistic?

They ridicule and condemn us because we stand for truth, that in the matters of faith we have a "Thus saith the Lord" for the things we do and practice. "Jimmy, you are just too concerned about obedience; you're what we call a Bible thumper; you're just determined to keep God's commandments; you're just a Pharisee!" How presumptuous for some to denounce one who exhibits loyalty and faithfulness to God's words, as if we are doing a bad thing!

Look at the Pharisees: yes, they were guilty of hypocrisy (**Matthew 23:1ff**); yes, they pretended to be righteous, "but inwardly are full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness" (**Matthew 23:27**). Yes, their righteousness was only an outward appearance of righteousness (**Matthew 23:28**); yes, they went about to establish "their own righteousness" (**Romans 10:3**) by authorizing and observing man-made traditions. Yes, they gave attention to some Biblical truths but also neglected others of greater importance (**Matthew 23:23-24**). But, I do want you to notice that the Pharisees were not condemned because they were too zealous about strict obedience to God's will. They were condemned because "they say, and do not" (**Matthew 23:2**).

People need to wake up! God has always been pleased with the person who maintains absolute loyalty to the specifics of His commands (**John 14:15; 15:14; Hebrews 5:9**). Shame on a person who calls one a legalist, fundamentalist, a Bible thumper or a Pharisee for the purpose of denouncing him because he exhibits loyalty, faithfulness, and obedience to God's word. "To obey is better than sacrifice" (**1 Samuel 15:22**). Samuel made it clear that no amount of sacrifice can take the place of obedience to

God's Word. Nothing is acceptable to God unless it is done according to His will (**Leviticus 10:1ff**).

If man is to be victorious in living life acceptably before God His Creator, then He must have a proper regard for God's authority. That which God expects of man and that upon which salvation is conditioned may be summed up in one word: **OBEDIENCE (Hebrews 5:8-9)**. And that salvation is available to such as obey Him, "but he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him" (**John 3:36**). Obedience to the will of God is expected if we are to enter the kingdom of heaven (**Matthew 7:21-23**). Obedience to the will of God is required if we are to abide for ever (**1 John 2:17**). Obedience is required of all, and if we refuse then we have no right to call Jesus our Lord (**Luke 6:46**). "For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother" (**Mark 3:35**).

Everything we read in scripture compels us toward grateful submissions and obedience to His will. Many who have this attitude toward rigid obedience are actually demonstrating they are weak and unfaithful to God; calling one a legalist, fundamentalist, Pharisee or Bible thumper is just a cover up to give good reason for their departure from the faith and their own weakness in the faith. The religious thinking is "we want a faith without restraints or responsibilities" - no "Thou shalt nots," no laws or commandments to keep - just love and grace and freedom. These false teachers freely label emphasis on keeping the commands of God as "legalism." Truly, one is a legalist if a claim is made that obeying God's commands obligates God and, therefore, a person deserves salvation. Never have I heard any such teaching among us, nor have I known of any member boasting of obeying God. To the contrary! "So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded of you, say, we are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do" (**Luke 17:10**). Jehovah has always required His

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children to carefully obey His commandments without addition, subtraction or substitution (**Deuteronomy 4:2; Leviticus 10:1-2; Galatians 1:6-9; 2 John. 9-11; Revelation 22:18-19**). We must do things exactly right to be pleasing to God, "*Whatsoever is commanded by the God of heaven, let it be done exactly for the house of the God of heaven*" (**Ezra 7:23**).

So, if you are calling me a legalist, fundamentalist, a Bible thumper or Pharisee because I show evidence of

loyalty, faithfulness and obedience to God's word, **THANK YOU** for the comments! The disobedient will perish (**Romans 6:16-18; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9**). "*The wicked plotteth against the just, and gnasheth upon him with his teeth. The Lord will laugh at him; for he seeth that his day is coming*" (**Psa 37:12-13**). Only those who obey Jesus as Lord are saved by the Savior (**Hebrews 5:8-9**). "*(This is) the end of the matter; all hath been heard: fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole (duty) of man*" (**Eccl. 12:13**). ♦

## **"The Blood Of Christ"** By Jarrod Jacobs

Our Lord shed His blood on the cross over 2000 years ago. Yet, it is still as powerful as ever. It has cleansing power, the likes of which has not been equaled by man. In fact in this study, we will see that while there is nothing man can do to cleanse himself from sin, Christ's blood can cleanse man from every sin! Let us study about our Lord's shed blood and its meaning and purpose in the lives of people today. Certainly this is a subject worthy of our study.

### **Christ's Blood Makes The Forgiveness Of Sins Possible.**

I am sure we are already aware of this fact, but it does good to consider some pertinent passages on the subject of forgiveness. First, Jesus said His blood would be "*poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins*" (**Matt. 26:28**). This happened at the cross. Can we think of anything more wonderful than forgiveness? Forgiveness of our sins is not possible in any other way except through the shed blood of Christ on the cross! This is truly a gift from God.

Read the apostle Paul's words as he stated the importance of Christ and His shed blood. "*But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it – the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus*" (**Rom. 3:21-26**).

Put simply, there is no difference between Jew and Gentile, for "*all have sinned.*" This being true, our Lord

justified all and became the "*propitiation*" (sin offering) for all mankind through the shedding of His blood. Therefore, as we believe in Jesus Christ, and do what He has said to do in order to be saved (repent of our sins and be baptized, **Rom. 10:16; Acts 2:36-38**), we can have forgiveness of sins because He shed His blood for us! What a wonderful thing for men to consider! Without the blood of Christ, there is no salvation. In addition to the statements in the book of Romans, study the books of Ephesians and Colossians. In those letters, the apostle Paul again made it clear that Christ's blood brought about the forgiveness of sins (**Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14**).

The apostle Peter wrote to the "*elect exiles of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia*" and told them that they "*were ransomed ... not with perishable things such as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish or spot*" (**I Pet. 1:18-19**). This same truth applies today. Our redemption did not come through physical power. We cannot "earn" our way into Heaven. Rather, Christ's shed blood made it possible for us to one day see Heaven!

Another text worthy of our study is the apostle John's words in the book of Revelation. This apostle was banished to the island of Patmos, and was allowed by Christ to pen the following: "*John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you, and peace, from him who is, and who was, and who is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne; And from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings on earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his own blood*" (**Rev. 1:4-5**). Truly, we cannot say enough about what the blood of Christ means to every man and woman!

*Continued from Page Two, "The Blood Of Christ"*

### Christ's Blood Purchased The Church.

We know that Christ promised to build His church in **Matthew 16:18**. Yet, in addition to this promise, Christ also paid the purchase-price for the church! The apostle Paul declares that Christ's church was purchased when He shed His blood on the cross. This fact is recorded in the book of Acts when this dear brother met with the Ephesian elders at Miletus for the last time. He told them, *"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood"* (**Acts 20:28**). He later wrote a letter to the Ephesian Christians and told them that Christ *"loved the church, and gave himself up for her"* (**Eph. 5:25**).

After learning this, how can anyone belittle the importance of the Lord's church with a clear conscience? Jesus Christ thought the church was so important that He died and shed His blood to purchase her (**Jn. 19:33-34**)! If it was that important to Christ, it must be that important to me! If the Lord saw the church as a prized possession, I am not going to belittle her! Let us make sure that we hold the Lord's church in high regard. Something that is this precious, this valuable, deserves our honor and our respect!

Seeing that these things are true, I see it as no coincidence that when one becomes a Christian, and is washed in the blood of the Lamb, that he is also added to the Lord's church at the same time (**Rev. 1:5; Acts 2:47**)!

### Christ's Blood Can Be Counted Unholy.

In spite of what Christ has done for us, we see that

there are some who would *"profane"* Christ's blood (**Heb. 10:29**). Who are these people? They are the ones who would *"go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth"* (**Heb. 10:26**). Therefore, when one voluntarily forsakes God's laws, whether it be in forsaking the assembling of ourselves together (**Heb. 10:25**, this is in the context); in using filthy language (**Eph. 5:4**); in lascivious actions (**Gal. 5:19-21**); etc., then he is leaving the commands and precepts of God! As a result, he is guilty of profaning Christ's holy and divine blood.

This is why we need to be reminded daily to stay faithful to the Lord God (**Rev. 2:10**). We need to be *"steadfast and unmovable"* (**I Cor. 15:58**). We need to continue to *"walk in the light, as he is in the light"* (**I Jn. 1:7**). One way we do this is by remembering who we are, and remembering where we once were. The Ephesians were reminded of this when they were told they were once *"dead in trespasses and sins"* (**Eph. 2:1**). At one time they were *"separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world"* (**Eph. 2:12**). Yet, it was the blood of Christ that brought them *"near"* to God (**v. 13**)!

### Conclusion

Since we were once in the same position as the Ephesians, let us never consider Christ's blood unholy or common through willful sin; but let us live according to the will of God as Christ did (**Jn. 12:49-50**) so that one day we can be with our Lord in Heaven for eternity! How wonderful is the power of the blood of Christ! Let us thank God for His wonderful sacrifice (**I Cor. 15:57, II Cor. 2:14, 8:16, 9:15**)!

*Credit: The Old Paths – 5/26/13 ♦*

## Do You Just Belong?

Are you an active member?  
 The kind that would be missed?  
 Or are you just contented that your name is on the list?  
 Do you attend the meeting and mingle with the flock?  
 Or do you stay away to criticize and knock?  
 Do you take an active part to help the work along?  
 Or are you satisfied to only just belong?  
 Think this over, my dear friends:  
 I know you won't go wrong.  
 Are you an active member, or do you  
 just belong? ♦

Life Is Like A Grindstone – And Whether It Grinds A Person Down  
 Or Polishes Him Depends On The Stuff He Is Made Of. ♦

***A pint of example is worth a barrel full of advice.***

## Fearful or Faithful? By Jonathan L. Perz

Just as faith has the power to overcome fear, one of the most powerful suppressors of faith is fear. Fear as a reverential awe for God is not the antithesis for faith, but fearful thoughts that terrify and scare us. One fear is healthy and commanded (**Matthew 10:28**), the other is cowardly and condemnable (**Revelation 21:8**). One motivates us toward great and noble feats while the other cripples us in base and selfish acts.

There are several instances where the Bible demonstrates these critical differences. Before Jesus stilled the storm-tossed sea, the disciples were terrified thinking they were perishing. Jesus, in response to their fear, asked, "Why are you fearful, O you of little faith?" (**Matthew 8:25-26**). Fear paralyzed them, where faith would have comforted and encouraged them.

The Hebrew writer tells us of the faith of Noah. "By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved

*with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith" (Hebrews 11:7).* Noah chose to let faith govern his actions, moving with a reverential awe for God, ultimately saving his house and mankind.

In like fashion, the same context tells us of Moses and how "by faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible" (**Hebrews 11:27**). Because Moses chose to act by faith, rather than fear, he endured and delivered Israel.

As in these instances, the question remains for us, will we choose to live our lives in the flesh by fear or will we let faith govern our actions despite the possible imagined outcomes? Fearful or faithful—the choice is ours!

Credit: [www.moodychurchofchrist.com](http://www.moodychurchofchrist.com) ♦

### HOW TO GET WHAT YOU WANT

- If you want friends — **be friendly.**
- If you want someone to smile — **smile.**
- If you want courtesy — **be courteous.**
- If you want knowledge — **study.**
- If you want a good name — **live right.**
- If you want to reap well — **sow well.**
- If you want to be a Christian — **obey God's word.**
- If you want to go to heaven — **live a Christian life ♦**

### 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

<b>About the Hillcrest church of Christ</b>		
<b>Evangelist: Jimmy Pettigrew</b>		
<b>How to Contact Us</b>	<b>Our Address</b>	<b>Schedule of Assembly</b>
<p><b>Telephone:</b> (920)499-5677 <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:hillcrestcofc@live.com">hillcrestcofc@live.com</a></p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;">   </div>	<p>1621 Hillcrest Drive Green Bay, WI 54313</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div>	<p><b>Bible Study:</b> Sunday, 9:00am <b>Worship Service:</b> Sunday, 10:00am <b>Bible Study:</b> Wednesday, 7:00pm*</p> <p style="font-size: small; text-align: right;">*A song service is held on the last Wednesday of every month</p>
<b><a href="http://www.hillcrestchurchofchrist.com">www.hillcrestchurchofchrist.com</a></b>		