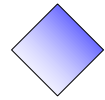


The Voice of Truth



January 19, 2014

Saint or Sinner By Jimmy Pettigrew

I was asked recently: Are saints also sinners? Is there a difference between a Christian and a sinner? I replied: One cannot be an idolater and an ex-idolater at the same time. When one quits worshipping idols, he is no longer an idolater. When one obtains pardon, he no longer has guilt from his prior activities. One is not a sinner and a saint simultaneously! A saint may commit a sin, but the practice of sin has been put away because of repentance. *“Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; and on his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, that bringeth forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also doth not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. The wicked are not so, but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; but the way of the wicked shall perish” (Psalm 1:1-6).* The blessed man does not walk the course of his life in the counsel of the ungodly or sinners. Sinners will not stand in the congregation of the righteous. The sinner; at first he walks merely in the counsel of the ungodly; but after that, he becomes habituated to evil, and he stands in the way of sinners who willfully violate God's law; and finally, he becomes a teacher of evil and tempter of others, as he sits in the seat of the scornful. A saint may commit a sin (**1 John 1:8**), but the practice of sin has been put away because of repentance. *“Know ye not, that to whom ye present yourselves (as) servants unto obedience, his servants ye are whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But thanks be to God, that, whereas ye were servants of sin, ye became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching whereunto ye were delivered; and being made free from sin, ye became servants of righteousness” (Romans 6:16-18).* These verses show they have obeyed, and were made free from sin. They had been sinners, but all that is past when they enter into Christ! Obedience unto the form of doctrine

(shown before in **verses 3-6**) had brought them into Christ where there is no condemnation (**Romans 8:1**).

We see the Corinthian letters the many sins the Corinthians were guilty of; Paul indicted all fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers and extortioners; but then he said, *“And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Corinthians 6:9-11).* Would you call them sinners? Paul addressed them as “sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints” (**1 Corinthians 1:2**). Sure, they had been vile sinners, but that was BEFORE! After coming into Christ they drank of the Spirit, and were members of His body (**1 Corinthians 12:13, 27**). Who dares call the redeemed sinners? Saints are not slaves to sin; we died to sin (**Romans 6:2**). *“Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God” (1 John 3:9).* Someone might say, “If Christians are dead to sin, how can they still sin?” Paul never teaches that a Christian never stumbles nor slips occasionally; John tells us this in (**1 John 1:9-10**). Paul only teaches that we are no longer in bondage to sin (**Romans 6:6**); it no longer has dominion over us (**Romans 6:9**); we are dead unto it (**Romans 6:11**), so it ceases to reign over us (**Romans 6:12**). The saint who abides in Jesus is not going to be habitually in sin. Sin is not his general rule of life. Why does the person who is born of God not sin habitually as the rule of life? Because his seed (**1 John 3:9**, God's seed, which is the Word of God, **Luke 8:11**) abides in him, and it is a great restraining power.

A sinner is one who practices sin. He may do well occasionally, but that does not make him a saint or servant of righteousness, for he does not voluntarily choose this course. A saint is one who serves the Lord; he may occasionally stumble and sin, but that is not his practice; it is not the course of his life. Let me use myself as an exam-

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ple: I have sinned, weakness occurs, what am I to do when such transpires? The proper action on the part of anyone in such a situation is to repent (turn from the sin or sins) and confess it with shame, and pray for its prompt pardon. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). He has promised to forgive us on the condition that we confess our sins . . . "and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7). Therefore . . . "their sins and iniquities will I remember no more" (Hebrews 10:17). If this is the case, then why should we call saints sinners? There is no sin in their life! If God remembers them no more, it will be as if they had

not been committed, the Christ bears them (1 Peter 2:24). Therefore, he is not a sinner!

Paul wrote to saints at Ephesus and Philippi, and to saints and faithful brethren at Colosse. Paul never called the saints sinners! They had been saved by the blood of Christ. Paul recognized the difference! "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints" (1 Corinthians 14:33). Are saints' sinners? NO! Is there a difference between a Christian and a sinner? YES! "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints" (Psalm 116:15). Not the death of sinners (Ezekiel 33:11). ♦

"A New Year" By Jarrod Jacobs

Exodus 12:2 records the words God spoke to Moses and Aaron when He said, "This month shall be for you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year for you." These words preceded God's command to observe the Passover feast for the first time. This feast was then commemorated by Israel each year as a memorial to the time God granted them freedom and victory over Egypt. I think of **Exodus 12** around this time of year, for we are also allowed to see "the beginning of months" when we enter the month of January. Even greater than this is the fact that those who are Christians can look back to the day when they became Christians (**Mk. 16:16; Acts 11:26**), and realize that the day they were born again, was the "beginning" of their spiritual life.

A "New Year" Is Significant

A new year means something to mankind. We know a new year is significant to man when we see the numerous people shooting fireworks, firing guns, having parties, etc., when the new year arrives. More than this, the beginning of a new year represents something important. It means we can look forward to 12 months in which to renew ourselves, better ourselves, and to grow spiritually if we apply ourselves. However, 12 more months can be wasted if we decide we will not do anything more in 2014 than we did in 2013 or 2012, etc. Similarly, the Israelites were allowed an opportunity to leave Egypt and to start a "new life" on their own, away from the shackles and sins of Egypt. Unfortunately, many of the Israelites were not happy with God's way and wanted to go back to Egypt (**Ex. 14:12; Num. 11:4-5; Acts 7:39**; etc.). The "beginning of months" from **Exodus 12** ultimately meant nothing to them. What will we do with our "new year"?

God Is Interested In Our "New Year"

God is eternal, but He understands that man lives within the confines of time. This is made clear as He inspired men to write such truths as: "...behold now is the favorable time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (**II Cor. 6:2**); and "Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise, but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil" (**Eph. 5:15-16**). Obviously, God is concerned with how man, His creation, spends his time! Are we being wasteful with our time, or are we doing our best to use our time in the best way we can?

How often have we been asked by someone, "Where did the day go?" Does such an expression not show us just how fleeting life is? Moses prayed, "So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom" (**Ps. 90:12**). He also said our life, even at 70 or 80 years, is "soon gone, and we fly away" (**Ps. 90:10**). James said our life is "a mist that appears for a little time, and then vanishes" (**Jas. 4:15**). In light of these facts, what are we going to do with 2014? We have already used up 4 days out of the year 2014. What have we done with them?

What Will We Do With This "New Year"?

Brethren, will we live 2014 for the better or for the worse? Will we spend our time this year glorifying God or self (**I Cor. 1:30-31**)? How about spending some time in this new year mending some fences? Are there people in your life against whom you have sinned? Stop ignoring this situation, and go to them and try to work out whatever problem you have with one another. This is what Jesus taught us to do in **Matthew 18:15**. This is also what Jesus told the people when He said, "So if you are offering your

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gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift before the altar, and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come offer your gift" (Matt. 5:23-24). In other words, **do not** wait for them to come to you in 2014! Go to them and work it out!

Perhaps we as Christians need to repent before God and make things "right" with Him through repentance and prayer (**Acts 8:22**). God is ready and willing to forgive us when we repent and return to Him. Will we do this, or will we waste another year away from God and out of fellowship with Him (**I Jn. 1:5-6; II Jn. 9**)? It is true that there are things which happen in the course of a year that we cannot control. However, there are things we can control, beginning with our attitude, our speech, and our actions (**Phil. 4:8; I Pet. 3:10; Matt. 7:21**). In other words, in 2014, change the one thing you CAN change — self!

Answering our question another way, we might also ask, will we spend this year looking for opportunities to bring lost people to Christ? The Bible makes it clear that Christians are taught to teach (**II Tim. 2:2**). Christ came to this world, wasting no time, but being active in looking for lost people (**Lk. 19:10**; etc.). Are we following in His footsteps (**I Pet. 2:21**)? Will we follow in the Lord's footsteps in this new year?

What will we do with this new year? How about spending time in 2014 doing our best not only to save the lost,

but also to keep the saved, saved? There seems to be an attitude among some that our work with others ends at simply teaching folks about faith, repentance, and baptism! Yes, people need to know this (**Mk. 16:16**), but they also need to know what is necessary to remain faithful and obedient to the God of Heaven (**Matt. 28:20; I Cor. 15:58; Rev. 2:10**)! I find it more than coincidental that we have five books of the New Testament written to tell folks what to do to be saved; and then we have twenty-two books of the New Testament written to those who have already been saved! Do we get the point? Obviously God is concerned about keeping the saved, saved! Are we interested in the same things God is interested in? If we were not in 2013 and previous years, why not begin a new way of thinking and living in 2014!

Conclusion

The apostle Paul wrote to the Romans and said, "*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect" (Rom. 12:1-2).* Could we think of any greater encouragement? We are the servants/slaves of God! Let us be the best we can be by living for God today and everyday. Let us make 2014 a year dedicated to Him, and to doing everything by the authority of Christ (**Col. 3:17**).

Credit: The Old Paths - 1/5/14 ♦

POINTS TO PONDER...

Today, well lived, makes every yesterday a dream of happiness and every tomorrow a vision of hope.

This time, like all other times, is a good one if we but know what to do with it.

It is one of the most compensations of life: that no man can help another without helping himself.

Each of us is a noble creation! Let us not fail to exhibit it in action and good deeds. ♦

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 (**I 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**). ♦

THE ETERNAL KINGDOM

1. There is an eternal kingdom.

2 Pet. 1:11; 1 Cor. 15:50; 2 Tim. 4:18; Luke 23:42

2. It will be ushered in at His Coming and Judgment.

2 Tim. 4:1; Matt. 25:31-34

3. There are only two alternatives.

Mark 9:43-48; Matt. 8:11-12; Luke 13:23-30

4. The rich will hardly enter it.

Matt. 19:24-26; Mark 10:23-27; Luke 18:24-27

5. The poor, rich in faith, are heirs of it.

James 2:5

6. The wicked shall not inherit it.

1 Cor. 6:9-10; Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 5:3-6

This includes the wicked in the kingdom.

Matt. 13:31; ex. Matt. 22:11-13; 25:26-30

7. What must we do?

Do the will of the Father - Matt. 7:21-23

Continue in the faith - Acts 14:21-22

Give diligence to add the virtues - 2 Pet. 1:5-11 ♦

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

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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