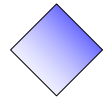


The Voice of Truth



May 11, 2014

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

Continued on Page Three

In This Issue...

Pages 1 to 2 - That's Just Your Interpretation!
Pages 2 to 3 - "5 Things We Will Never Do"

Pages 3 to 4 - The Journey to Understanding
Page 4 - TRY THESE EXCUSES | What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Continued from Page One, "That's Just Your Interpretation!"

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)**. ♦

"5 Things We Will Never Do"

By Jarrod Jacobs

When someone hears about the Caneyville church of Christ, or comes to visit for the first time, he may have some questions about what we do and why. While this is not an exclusive list, here are five things we will never do; for if we did them, we'd cease to be a church "of" (belonging to) Christ.

1. We will never tell you that man's ways are as good as God's ways.

Actually, man's ways are lower than God's ways (**Isa. 55:8-9**). In fact, we find man's ways stand polar opposite to what God wants! Jeremiah stated the truth when he said: *"O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps."* The apostle Paul said even the *"foolishness of God is wiser than men"* (**I Cor. 1:25**).

2. We will never tell you that God accepts every kind of worship, so it does not matter how one worships.

From **Genesis 4** when God accepted Abel's offering and rejected Cain's, through the rest of the Bible, we see God interested in how men worship Him. He has never left it up to man to do what he pleases in worship. In the New Testament, we find God wanting men to worship Him *"in spirit and in truth"* (**Jn. 4:24**). The New Testament also reveals what acts are necessary for Scriptural worship. These are singing, prayer, preaching, partaking of the Lord's Supper, and giving (**Acts 2:42, 20:7; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; I Cor. 16:1-2**; etc.). Man is not allowed to "pick and choose" or "substitute" what he wants for worship. In passages like **Leviticus 10:1-2**, we see the consequences when men decide to worship their way, and not God's way.

3. We will never tell you that since God is loving, we all have a right to live any way we want.

It is without contradiction that God is love (**I Jn. 4:8**), and that God's love is seen in the sacrifice of His Son on the cross (**Jn. 3:16**). At the same time, speaking of God's love does not mean He accepts just anything! Please remember what is said in **Romans 11:22**. Also, bear in mind that there will be people lost in Hell for eternity (**Rev. 21:8**). Yet, this is not because God is not loving. He has made every provision possible for man to be saved from

sin and be in Heaven (**II Pet. 3:9**). Yet, if we refuse Him and die in sin, there are consequences we must face.

4. We will never make light of trying to do exactly what God tells us to do in the Bible.

It is unfortunate that we see folks who will belittle others when they try to do only what the Lord says. Perhaps this has happened to you, and you have been mocked or teased for trying to obey God faithfully. Some may have called you "goody two-shoes," "Bible-thumper", or they may have called you a "Pharisee". (**I Pet. 4:4**) Some may do worse than just speak ill of you, and they may treat you in an evil way because you're doing what is right (**Heb. 10:32-34; I Thess. 2:14**). We promise to never ridicule, but encourage and help you on your journey to obey Jehovah (**Heb. 12:12-14; Rom. 14:19; I Thess. 5:11; Eph. 4:29**).

5. We will never tell you that the way to receive forgiveness of sins is to pray "The Sinner's Prayer."

The reason why will we not encourage such is because man is not saved from sins by praying a prayer. In order to be saved from sins, we must believe on Christ, repent of our sins, confess Christ as the Son of God, and be baptized for the remission of sins (**Jn. 8:24; Lk. 13:3; Rom. 10:10; Acts 2:38**; etc.). When we read about the cases of conversion in the book of Acts (**Acts 2, 9-11, 16, 18-19**), we never read about people being told to pray a certain prayer. Rather, they are taught the plan of salvation we have described above. This is God's plan of salvation, and this plan has been taught to millions of people through history, and continues to be taught today by those who love the Lord and respect His will.

Conclusion

These are 5 things the Caneyville church of Christ will never do; for if we did, we would cease to be a church "of" (belonging to) Christ. Are you interested in being a Christian as is found in the Bible (**Acts 11:26**)? Are you interested in living the life of a Christian as described in the Bible? Let us study our Bibles and do what the Lord says so we can see Heaven together! Credit: The Old Paths - 1/16/13*

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

The Journey to Understanding

By Jonathan L. Perz

To those who think that seeking and finding God is easy: think again.

Listening to Paul explain Abraham's justification demonstrates the complexity of God's mind. God's plan of justification by faith in Christ Jesus is so intricate and detailed, that it takes divine intervention—the inspiration of the Holy Spirit—to understand it. If the apostle Paul hadn't written down his inspired understanding of this mystery for us (cf. **Eph. 3:1-7**), we couldn't possibly have riddled out those details by ourselves. Every detail matters—from when God justified Abraham (before Abraham's circumcision) to how God justified Abraham (faith accredited as righteousness). Over four hundred years between Moses and Abraham, and God purposed every last detail. Nearly two thousand years later, men still wrestle and struggle to grasp knowledge that God has always known. The same principle applies to every other inspired word revealed to us in Scripture.

Some argue that God does not expect us to pull bits and pieces from here and there to discern what He means, wants or desires. I wholeheartedly disagree. Clearly, God does want us to study His word in detail and rightly divide it (**2 Tim. 2:15**). Anyone who has read Paul's inspired explanation of the intricacies of God's thinking, as He unfolded His plan to redeem mankind from sin, knows this to be true. Who would've thought that the lack of the plural "s" in "seeds" mattered at all (cf. **Gal. 3:16**)? God did. Not one jot or tittle (the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet and the smallest stroke in the Hebrew letter) passed from the Law until ALL was fulfilled (**Matt. 5:18**, emphasis mine, jlp).

Even Christ spoke in parables with this express purpose in mind. When asked "why," He explained, "*Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given*" (**Matt. 13:11**). It was not because God respected one person over another (cf. **Gal. 2:6**), but because, "*seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand*" (**Matt. 13:13**). As Jesus prayed, "*I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes*" (**Matt. 11:25**). Even more amazing is that this prayerful statement caveated some of Jesus' most famous words—words often abused to demonstrate how "easy" it is to enter heaven, "*Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My*

yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light" (**Matt. 11:28-30**).

Paul, an inspired writer, quotes from the words of the prophets, "*For who has known the mind of Lord?*" (**Rom. 11:33-36; Isa. 40:13; Jer. 23:18**). Who indeed! The Ethiopian eunuch, when asked if he understood what he was reading from **Isaiah 53**, answered, "*How can I, unless someone guides me?*" (**Acts 8:30-31**). How indeed! Jesus teaches us, "*narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it*" (**Matt. 7:13-14**). Few indeed! Is it this way because God desires few to be saved (cf. **John 3:17; 1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:9**), or is it because God only wants those who truly seek Him?

The more I study God's word, the more I am convinced that the journey to understanding is just as important as the understanding itself. As Jacob wrestled with the Man at Peniel (cf. **Gen. 32:22-30**), God wants us to wrestle with His word. God wants us to struggle "until dawn" with it—until the day dawns and the morning star rises in our hearts (cf. **2 Pet. 1:19b**). There is not a chance that we will come out of this struggle unchanged.

God didn't give us His word and will in 'cliff notes' format. There is no bullet point summary that can truly encapsulate the mind of God. There is no simple list of rules to follow. We can simplify and simplify and simplify, but we can never quite capture it in our simplifications because that is not the intent. I am convinced that His intent is not just for us to know what His will is, or even just to understand it, but to be conformed to it and transformed by it (cf. **Rom. 12:2; 2 Cor. 3:18; Phil. 3:21, et al**). The only way this truly happens is when, "**...you incline your ear to wisdom, and apply your heart to understanding; yes, if you cry out for discernment, and lift up your voice for understanding, if you seek her as silver, and search for her as for hidden treasures; then you will understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.**" (Prov. 2:2-5, emphasis mine, jlp). It is not enough to just know what to do so you can do it, you must know what to do *and become it*. That is not "easy."

The point is that you have to want it. You have to want God's righteousness and kingdom more than anything in this world before He will reveal it to you. You have to be willing to sell all that you have to gain it (cf. **Matt. 13:44-**

Continued from Page Three, "The Journey to Understanding"

46; Prov. 23:23). You must be willing to forsake everything—whatever your "ALL" might be (**Luke 14:33**). You have to want it for the right reasons. Anything less than this will fall short when it comes to seeking and finding God. The beautiful promise of our Lord is, "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he

who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened" (**Matt. 7:7-8**).

The problem is not that God can't be understood and found. The problem is that too many don't want to understand Him or to seek Him diligently. "*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled*" (**Matt. 5:6**). *Credit: www.moodychurchofchrist.com ♦*

TRY THESE EXCUSES

The following list of excuses is presented for your use the next time you miss work and need a good reason. These are some of the excuses that brethren have used thousands of times in the past. Obviously, if the Lord will accept them, they should satisfy your boss:

1. I'm sorry I wasn't at work yesterday, but some friends came by unexpectedly.
2. I'm sorry I wasn't at work yesterday, but we went to visit family and didn't make it back in time.
3. I'm sorry I wasn't at work yesterday, but I was with you in spirit.
4. I'm sorry I wasn't at work yesterday, but I decided to make my traveling plans during the time I was supposed to be at work and just could not make it.
5. I'm sorry I wasn't at work yesterday, but I don't like getting out when it is cold, hot, raining, or snowing.
6. I'm sorry I wasn't at work yesterday, I thought I would go work someplace else for a day, you know, just for a change.
7. I'm sorry I wasn't at work yesterday, gas prices are just too high to be driving.
8. I'm sorry I wasn't at work yesterday, I worked around the house, and I was just too tired to come.
9. I'm sorry I wasn't at work yesterday; I went to Six Flags and a ball game and got home late. I needed to sleep, I was tired.
10. I'm sorry I wasn't at work yesterday, I had to cook dinner.

These excuses won't work with either your boss or with God! ♦

Don't think you can ignore the Lord in this life and He will give you a crown in the Life to come. ♦

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