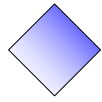


The Voice of Truth



July 20, 2014

"Is Christ Magnified In Your Life?"

By Jimmy Pettigrew

What do you do to a thing when you magnify it? The unthinking answer is, "You make it larger." But, a magnifying glass doesn't make the print larger. It improves your vision so that you see it more clearly and distinctly. Paul states that Christ would be magnified in his body. *"According to my earnest expectation and hope, that in nothing shall I be put to shame, but (that) with all boldness, as always, (so) now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether by life, or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain"* (Philippians 1:20-21). Christ would be magnified by Paul's life. The world would see Christ more clearly and distinctly. Paul would be Christ's magnifying glass for the whole world! Paul became more and more like Christ, and the world could see Christ living and walking in Paul's life.

Is Christ magnified in your life? The world is to see Christ revealed in His followers. He declared, *"As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world... Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven"* (Matthew 5:14-16). This is what is meant to magnify Christ! *"That ye may become blameless and harmless, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye are seen as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life . . ."* (Philippians 2:15-16).

The manner of life of the Christian will be either a real asset or a significant liability to the cause of Christ. The conduct of the Christian should "adorn" the doctrine of

God (Titus 2:10). "Adorn" means to beautify. The life of a faithful Christian reveals the beauty of God's will and way. *"For ye were once darkness, but are now light in the Lord: walk as children of light: (for the fruit of the light is in all goodness and righteousness and truth), proving what is well-pleasing unto the Lord"* (Ephesians 5:8-10).

The manner of life of the immoral or the indifferent member of the church is a stumbling block to others (Romans 14:13). The life of the faithful, dedicated Christian magnifies the Christ (Philippians 1:20). Christians are the epistles which the world reads before being introduced to those within the Bible. *"Ye are our epistle, written in our hearts, known and read (fall men; being made manifest that ye are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us . . ."* (2 Corinthians 3:2-3). By such epistles Christ is magnified to a skeptical world.

Do you magnify His obedient spirit (Hebrews 5:8-9; John 14:15)? Do you magnify His spirit of self-denial (2 Corinthians 8:9; Luke 9:23)? Would you preach that worship is incidental, Bible study is insignificant, giving is unimportant (John 4:23; Hebrews 10:25; I Corinthians 16:1-2)? What do you preach with your life? What kind of example of Christian living do you show?

You are the only gospel some people will read; the only sermon some will hear; and the only epistle some will accept! Jesus Christ should be magnified in the life of the Christians! ♦

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 ♦**

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“Bug Zappers Or Bird Feeders?”

By Jarrod Jacobs

The title above may seem strange, but if you read this article to completion, I believe you will see that the question is relevant. I am sure most of our dear readers are familiar with bug zappers. This device contains a light which attracts bugs. As the bugs approach the light, they land on an electric wire which electrocutes them. Who does not like to sit outside on a warm summer evening and watch bugs meet their end in a zapper?

Furthermore, we are getting to the fall and winter seasons in which the birds who do not migrate will be searching for food. Some folks who enjoy watching the birds will set out food so they can watch the birds out their windows. At times, squirrels or other animals try to feed from the bird feeder, but nevertheless, the birds get fed, and people get the pleasure of watching the variety of birds out their window. In fact, many people set their feeders out all year long so they can watch the birds.

Comparisons And Contrasts

We can compare and contrast these two things fairly easily. First, we see that both the light from the bug zapper and the food from the feeder will attract various creatures. The appearance of these things are benign, and both stand ready to accept those who come to it. The bug zapper is no respecter of persons. If an animal or a man happens to touch the electric wire, they will get a shock, just as bugs do. In like manner, a bird feeder will feed squirrels, or other animals deemed by man as “pests” in addition to the intended birds. It is no respecter of persons.

In contrast, the bug zapper attracts in order to destroy. The bird feeder attracts in order to nourish. No bugs ever left the bug zapper better than when they entered. Yet, the animals attracted to the bird feeder will leave the feeder in better shape than when they approached.

Which Describes Us?

There are those today who are like that bug zapper. They attract folks to them so as to destroy them. No wonder, for you see, Satan is like this! He has deceived folks from the beginning (**Gen. 3**), and has been determined to destroy men ever since (**Jn. 8:44; I Pet. 5:8**)! Therefore, it should be no surprise that those who are walking on the

“broad way” that leads to destruction (**Matt. 7:13-14**) are also acting like this. The description of the woman in Proverbs 7 fits well here. The Bible tells us she attracted the naïve man with her “*fair speech*” and “*flattering*” and destroyed him (**Prov. 7:21, 23**). Just as an insect was attracted to the light and then electrocuted, so also, what seemed so wonderful at first to the young man, resulted in his destruction!

Thus it is today. People intent on hurting themselves will generally attract others to be like them (**Prov. 1:10-19**). This is what Korah, Dathan, and Abiram did (**Num. 16:1-3**). Their destructive message not only hurt them (**Num. 16:31-35**), but it had attracted many others, and they also were destroyed (**Num. 16:41-49**). In the New Testament, we are warned of the “*good words and fair speeches*” of the false teachers (**Rom. 16:18**). We are told that “*many* (not a few, JJ) *shall follow their pernicious ways*” (**II Pet. 2:2**). Such people shall be made “*spoil*” or “*merchandise*” as a result of following the harmful false doctrines of men (**II Pet. 2:3; Col. 2:4, 8**). The end result is that these folks must face “*the wrath of God*” (**Eph. 5:6**).

In contrast to this, there are those who act like the bird feeder. They attract folks for the purpose of building up and nourishing them (**Eph. 4:29b; Col. 4:6**). Certainly, Jesus is like this. While on earth, He attracted folks to Him with the salvation message. This message continues to attract people today to be saved (**Rom. 1:16**). His crucifixion draws men to Him (**Jn. 12:32**). Furthermore, His gospel is described as “*milk*” and “*meat*” (**I Pet. 2:2; Heb. 5:12-14**) i.e., nourishment for the souls of men. His words are given for the benefit of man. When folks are attracted to Him, He gives life, not death (**Jn. 6:63**). None are harmed by God’s word, for there is spiritual benefit for all! (**Isa. 55:10-11**)

It is this same gospel message that we ought to have on our lips and in our lives (**I Pet. 4:11; Col. 3:17**). There is a world of lost souls today who will never know about Christ, nor His life-saving word unless we are active in teaching (**Mk. 16:15; II Tim. 2:2**). No, we do not attract folks to ourselves, but to Him! Jesus said when we let our lights shine, folks will see us and glorify God (**Matt. 5:16**). This benefits all! *Credit: The Old Paths - 10/6/13* ♦

Happy is the man who walks so close to God
That there is no room for the devil to
Get in between. ♦

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 ♦*

Watch For The Danger Signs

When prayer is a burden and not a privilege,
 When Bible reading is dull and puts men to sleep,
 When the sermon is too long,
 When the preacher's sermon makes me angry,
 When I try to make excuses for my sins,
 When I feel I am being left out,
 When I don't feel like singing,
 When I am sick and want people to visit me . . . and yet, I seldom visit anyone, sick or well,
 When someone is restored back to God and I don't rejoice with them,
 When it bothers me to be called on to give more,
 When I get all I want and think I need in one hour a week at church,
 When these things happen, watch out for **SPIRITUAL DECAY!!! ♦**

*If a hypocrite is between you and God,
 He must be closer to God than you are. ♦*

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