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IS SIN WORTH THE PRICE?

By Lavern Stewart

Our Lord paints a dark picture for the one who dies in his sins. Notice John 8:21, "Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins; whither I go, ye cannot come." Moreover, he not only cannot go to heaven, but rather must go to torment, as is said of those gathered out of the kingdom. In Matthew 13:41, 42 Jesus said, "The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of this kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Again, in Revelation 20:15, "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." This place of punishment, for those who die in their sins, is spoken of by Jesus as "the fire that never shall be quenched." (Mark 9:43.)

Just imagine spending an endless existence in a place such as the Bible pictures hell to be. Some, who refuse to face the facts, contend that the bad will be burned up, and will cease to exist. They have not learned that the torment of the bad will last just as long as the enjoyment of the good in heaven. The duration of the one is the same as for the other. Notice this in Matthew 25:46, "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal." According to Revelation 20:10, the torment in the lake of fire is "day and night forever and forever." There is no need to try to discredit the teaching about hell by saying that one is not conscious after death. The Bible states that the disobedient will be punished (2 Thess. 1:9), and to use the word punish is, of necessity, to imply consciousness. One could burn up a piece of wood, but he could not punish it because it is not capable of feeling pain.

"The work an unknown good man has done is like a vein of water flowing hidden underground, secretly making the ground green."

COMMUNICATIONS

By Ted Knight

Our society has become increasingly complex. As a result the need for communications has become more and more important. Without proper communication among all the various areas of life, chaos and confusion reign.

The need for good communications not only is vital in society but is especially critical in the Lord's church. The mission of the church is so tremendous that its being carried out must never be hindered by poor communications. However, we are all aware that many of the difficulties which have arisen through the years have come as a result of our not communicating properly with one another.

There are various areas in which improvement could be made in regard to this matter, let's look at some of them.

In order for the church to fulfill its purpose as God would have it do, it is necessary that good communications exist between the eldership and the membership of the congregation. If members of the church refuse to follow the leaders then no progress will be made. If there is no FOLLOW-SHIP there can be no LEADERSHIP. Since the matter of communications is a two-way street, there are responsibilities which rest upon the elders and members both. When the responsibilities are met, progress can be made and the Lord's work will prosper.

When we talk about elder-congregation relations we find two basic mistakes being made. One is made by the eldership and one by the membership. Let's look at these two extremes.

First, many elders feel that they have the authority to make any and all decisions affecting the Lord's work without regard for the feelings of others. They reason that if they cannot do that, then they should not be serving as elders. Brethren, it is not a matter of authority but a matter of wisdom in decision making. There are many decisions which elders must make on their own. Sometimes it isn't wise to consult

others on some matters. They have not only the authority to do so, but are obligated to do so. No one should object to this situation.

There are many instances, though, where it would be wise for the elders to talk with others about matters before making a decision. Simply communicating with others does not mean that elders have shirked their responsibility. There are many good and wise individuals who can offer invaluable assistance to the eldership, and it is a mark of wisdom on the part of the leadership to take advantage of such. After all, the apostle Peter declares that the elders are not to rule as lord's over God's heritage, 1 Peter 5:3. The iron-fist type of leadership in the church has created such a communications gap that often very few know or care what is being done. Brethren, this ought not to be.

A second misconception concerning elder-congregation relations is seen when members of the church feel that elders should make no decision without first consulting them. Such thinking is absurd and breeds all kinds of unrest and even division. Brethren, let us realize that the elders are human. They are subject to mistakes as much as others. They cannot lead the flock of God as it should be led if they are to spend all of their time asking others what should be done. They are given the authority and the duty to "oversee the flock of God." (1 Peter 5:2) There is no greater responsibility on earth than that resting upon them to feed, lead, guide, and protect God's sheep. They need our prayers and cooperation as they endeavor to fulfill their duties. Let us not only expect them to communicate with us, but let's communicate with them as well.

It is my judgment that if every member of the body of Christ would strive to improve communications between the leadership and the membership, great things will be done as a result.

"Don't think your Bible is dry inside because it is dusty outside."

**FULTON COUNTY
GOSPEL NEWS**

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and Harold Turner

SAVED BY GRACE ONLY?

By Glynn V. Purdy

So much is said about grace in the religious world and so many people are depending on grace to save them; yet millions do not know how to apply God's grace to their sins! Missions will be lost for a lack of understanding. Grace, of course, means "unmerited favor." So, we can conclude that man did not really merit anything which God has done for him, but it is ALL a matter of love on God's part. In Eph. 2:8, 9 God includes salvation under grace and faith. In this sense, faith includes everything which man must do in order to be saved. Faith without works is dead (James 2:17, 26). Faith must work by love (Gal. 5:6). And love is "keeping God's commandments" (I John 5:3). From this we learn that man must DO something to be saved. Jesus said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." (Matt. 7:21.) So, how do we accept the grace of God which saves us?

There is no way a person can be saved unless he knows how this grace works. How do we apply grace to our sins? We must let God tell us how this is done. In Titus 2:11-14 Paul wrote, "for the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for the blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Here we learn that the grace of God has appeared to ALL men. If we were saved by grace only and nothing on our part; all men would be saved. But we know that this is not true. All men will not be saved. How, then, did the grace of God appear to all men? The above Scripture states that it appears in the form of "teaching!" What does it teach? It teaches that man must give up sin and live for God. How do we give up sin? We are taught to "Repent, and be baptized...for the remission of sin." (Acts 2:38.) Without teaching Grace would be worthless. And, without

obedience (Matt. 7:21; James 2:26) faith, which comes from the teaching of grace (Rom. 10:17), is worthless.

The grace of God teaches man to hear the gospel (Rom. 10:17), to believe the gospel (Mark 16:15, 16), to repent of sins (Acts 17:30), to confess with the mouth the Lord Jesus (Rom. 10:9, 10), and then to be baptized for the remission of sin (Acts 2:38), and it teaches that at this point one is added to the church (Acts 2:47). It also teaches him now to grow (1 Peter 2:1, 2), and how to grow (2 Peter 1:1-11).

Without the grace of God none of this would be possible. Without the word of God none of this is possible. The grace of God that brings salvation works through the word. The faith that saves is revealed through the word, and faith leads one to obey God. So grace is God's part in teaching man how to be saved, and faith is man's part in believing and doing (James 1:22) what grace through the word instructs him to do to be saved. When we have done this we can truly say, "By grace I am saved through faith."

It takes both grace and faith according to God's definition of each to save us. All religions talk about grace and faith, and tell people that one is saved by either one or both, but most religions never give God's definition to saving grace and how man through obedient faith can apply this grace to his sins. It is easy to see that God's word and man's ideas are not the same. Many will face the judgment trusting man's definitions of grace and faith, only to hear the Master say, "I never knew you, depart from me, ye that work iniquity." (Matt. 7:23.) Since Christ is going to judge you according to his definition of his word, isn't it about time that you study for yourself? It is your soul, shouldn't you be interested enough to inquire of God what you must do to be saved? Are you going to trust some other man to tell you how to save your soul? Only the Lord can give you an assuring answer.

"Striking while the iron is hot is alright, but don't strike while the head is hot."

"There are very few shade trees on the road to success."

"Whom God would greatly exalt He first humbles."

"It is one of the beautiful compensations of life, that no man can sincerely try to help another without helping himself."

Holding The Coats Or Just Washing Our Hands?

By Larry Price

We occasionally hear sermons on the sin of omission. Prayers are also often worded asking for forgiveness of the sin of failing to do what one knows he should do. Yet seldom does anyone truly recognize this sin in their lives and make an effort to change. The effort of most is usually consumed in making excuses for not using an opportunity to do good.

The sin of omission goes much deeper, however, than the failure to do "good works." It eats away at the very core of the church, allowing error to exist and flourish, with few having the courage to speak out. We are outraged when people in New York ignore a mugging, but at the same time, many will allow sin to exist in the church and simply ignore it or even encourage it by sympathizing with those doing wrong.

Some feel if they simply don't get involved, somehow they bear no responsibility for the outcome. Pilate used this excuse when he gave Christ to the Jews, and tried to "wash his hands" of the matter. Saul held the coats of those who stoned Stephen. He wasn't directly involved in throwing stones, just as Pilate wasn't directly involved in the crucifixion, but both were guilty because they did nothing.

There are many excuses for doing nothing about sin. Some use peace as their excuse, ignoring what the Bible says about withdrawal of fellowship. Some use lack of knowledge as an excuse when no real effort is made to complete that knowledge. Others are just too interested in building an edifice or entertaining the

youth to get involved in keeping the church pure.

The church can't be kept pure, if we ignore the impurities. Whether the sin be idolatry, fornication, teaching error, forsaking the assembly, or unscriptural divorce, we are not our brother's friend when we ignore his sin.

I NEVER KNEW YOU

By Harold Turner

"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." (Matthew 7:21-23)

These words of our Lord deserve a serious and careful study by every person who anticipates living eternally with God. Jesus makes it clear that not every one is going to be saved eternally. In fact, he makes it clear that not all who are religious are going to be saved eternally. The people about whom Jesus spoke in the above words were people who believed in him as Lord, they profess having done many works in his name, and they lived in anticipation of going to heaven, but they were lost. Why? Jesus lists three reasons as to why these were lost, as well as implying several things that were not the reasons. Let's look first at some of the things that were not the reason for them being lost.

They were not lost because of disbelief. It is clearly obvious that they believed in Jesus as the Lord, because they had been serving in "his name." Many will be lost because of disbelief. In John 8:24 Jesus said, "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." And in John 3:18 Jesus said, "He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." The words of Jesus in Matt. 7:21-23 should serve as a warning to those who believe and teach that one is saved by "faith alone." These people were believers, but lost! While man is justified by faith (Rom. 5:1), it is not by faith alone. James wrote, "Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? Ye see then how that by works a man is justified and not by faith only." (James 2:22, 24)

These were not lost because of immorality. Their attitude toward sin is expressed in their words, "and in thy name have cast out devils." They believed that they had been working against Satan, and for the Lord. We could not contend that they had failed to repent, for their attitude indicates that they had repented.

They were not lost because of failing to do good works. They stated that they had "in thy name done many wonderful works." This would indicate that they had not done as little as they could get by with, but had done many wonderful works. We

are saved to do good works (Eph. 2:10), and those who refuse to do the works ordained of God will be lost, but this is not stated as the reason for these being lost.

There is one other thing indicated that was not the reason for these being lost. They were not lost because they had failed to tell others about the Lord. They said, "have we not prophesied in thy name?" The word, "Prophesied," is translated from the Greek word "propheteuo," and is defined as, "to tell forth Divine counsels." They were teaching the word of the Lord, and yet, they were lost.

These people believed on the Lord, they had fought against sin, they had done many wonderful works, and they had taught others, yet they are lost. Why?

Jesus accuses them of having worked iniquity. What did he mean by this accusation? Iniquity means lawlessness, or to transgress the law. The idea is to act without law, or to go beyond law. In 2 John 9 we are told, "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God..." Whatever one does religiously must be limited to the authority of Christ. In Col. 3:17 Paul warned, "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him." If we act without His authority we sin, and cut ourselves off from God. The silence of the Scriptures is important. Jesus tells us what he wants us to do, and this constitutes the principle that does not require him to list everything that he does not want. The people of whom Jesus spoke in Matt. 7:22 had acted religiously, but obviously without Divine law to guide them. This should teach us not to go beyond that which is written. There is nothing that can take the place of obedience.

A second thing that Jesus indicates as a reason for these being lost is that they had not done the will of the Father in heaven. They may have done what they thought was right and good, but in any case their religious service was not accepted. There is no way that we can give God the glory for a service that he has not authorized. The Bible continually places an emphasis upon our doing God's will. In Heb. 10:36 the writer states, "...after ye have DONE the will of God, ye might receive the promise." In 1 John 2:17, John stated, "...he that DOETH the will of God abideth forever." It is not enough to BELIEVE the will of God, we must DO it. Faith only will not save. Jesus is the "author of eternal salvation unto all them that OBEY him." (Heb. 5:9) We are made free from sin when we OBEY "from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered." (Rom.

6:17-18.) We purify our soul in OBEYING "the truth." (1 Peter 1:22)

There is obviously something that those in Matt. 7:22 had not obeyed. There was something about God's will that they had not DONE. Jesus stated, "I never knew you..." This suggests that they had never been a Christian, for Jesus knows those who belong to him, John 10:27. They may have believed on Christ, they may have repented of their sins, they may have confessed their faith in Christ to others, but they were never known as a Christian. Someone may have convinced them that they were saved by faith only, or someone may have convinced them of something that Jesus did not authorize, but whatever the case might have been, they were still lost.

Since they were never known by Christ, they were never in Christ, which helps us understand where they had fallen short. In Gal. 3:26 Paul shows that we are "Children of God IN Christ." In the next verse he states, "For as many of you as have been baptized INTO Christ have put on Christ." Also in Rom. 6:3 Paul said, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized INTO Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Outside Christ we are lost, as Paul shows in Eph. 2:12, saying, "That at that time ye were without Christ...having no hope, and without God in the world." We must be in Christ to be saved. In Acts 4:12 Peter states, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." To be in Christ one must be baptized. Those who have not been baptized for the remission of sins are not saved (Acts 2:38), and therefore they are not known by Christ. Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved..." (Mark 16:16) Those of Matt. 7:22 had obviously never been baptized for the right purpose.

The third thing that Jesus indicates as a reason why these were lost is that they were never in the kingdom. To be saved we must be in the kingdom. Paul shows this in Col. 1:13, 14 where he tells us that God "hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son; in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins." When Jesus returns he will return for the kingdom. In 1 Cor. 15:24 Paul said, "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father." Only those within the kingdom will be saved eternally. There may many standing before God in the judgment and speaking of the good works they did for Him, but

I WAS WRONG

By W. L. TOTTY

Why should it be so difficult for a Christian to confess, "I was wrong"?

Throughout the history of God's dealings with his people, He has demanded that His children confess their iniquity in order to have His approbation. Of the children of Israel, God said, "If they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, with their trespass which they trespassed against me, and that also they have walked contrary unto me;...if then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity: then will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember; and I will remember the land." (Lev. 26:40-42.)

Through Moses, the Lord spoke unto the children of Israel, saying, "When a man or woman shall commit any sin that men commit, to do a trespass against the Lord, and that person be guilty; then they shall confess their sin which they have done." (Num. 5:6-7.)

David, the man after God's own heart, was willing to repent of his sins and confess them. He said, "Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile...I acknowledge my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgression unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah." (Psalm 32:2, 5.)

In the New Testament we are told, "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed." (James 5:16.)

The apostle Paul freely admitted that he was chief of sinners (1 Tim. 1:15), even though he had persecuted the Christians in ignorance because of his former religious training. No, one cannot plead ignorance and be excused. Though Jesus prayed to the Father to forgive those Jews who were guilty of crucifying him because "they know not what they do," it is evident from the Scriptures that they were not forgiven until they acknowledged their guilt, repented of their sins, and were baptized at the preaching of Peter and the other apostles on the day of Pentecost following his crucifixion.

Likewise, we as Christians, if we ever expect to get to heaven, are going to have to assume some responsibility for our actions. When we have sinned, we must confess it and pray for forgiveness. Sometimes it is not enough to merely acknowledge to God that we have sinned. There are many sins which involve our actions toward our fellow man that must be rectified between the two of us in the manner which God has commanded. (Matt. 18:15; James 5:16.)

We cannot be like children, when they are corrected by their parents, who sometimes say, "He made me do it." We cannot place the blame on someone else and hide behind them.

Confessing our sins may at times demand that we accept some type of punishment for them, even though we will be forgiven of them; yet, if we are unwilling to humble ourselves to the point that we will endure the consequence of our sins, our character is not the type that God will accept. In order to be faithful and a true follower of Christ, we must be willing to say, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13), and get on with the business of confessing our wrongs and doing whatever is necessary to rectify them.

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"He who will relate the faults of others to you will relate your faults to others."

"A man would do nothing if he waited until he would do it so well that no one could find fault with what he did."

"Sin is the greatest of all detectives: be sure it will find you out."

"Faith is the link that binds our nothingness to Almightyness."

"The foolish and the dead never change their opinion."

"If trials make you impatient, then the devil laughs and is glad."

I NEVER KNEW YOU (Cont.)

unless one is in the kingdom his good works are to no avail. Paul shows in Col. 1:13 that we are either in darkness or in the kingdom. Darkness is a symbol of sin (John 3:19, 20; Acts 26:18). To be in the kingdom is to be saved, and is equivalent to being a member of the Lord's church, to which the Lord adds such as should be saved. (Acts 2:47)

The only hope for our salvation is in doing the will of God. This lesson from Jesus (Matt. 7:21-23) should cause each of us to take a serious look at our religious life. There isn't enough faith in the world to save man apart from obeying the will of God. Sincerity will not take the place of obedience. We must do God's will. His will is clearly revealed in the New Testament for us. By following this, we can assure ourselves of eternal life. May God help us to be diligent in our study and obedient to His word.

"Heaven's gates are wide enough to admit sinners saved by grace, but too narrow to admit any sin."

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