

Fulton County Gospel News

Good News About Christ And His Church For All Of The World

“... Christ is the head of the church: and He is the Savior of the body.” - Ephesians 5:23

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What Is A Man Profited?

Barry O'Dell

In the business world *profit* refers to the money that is made by an individual or company after all expenses, salaries, and taxes are paid. It has to do with financial benefit or gain after performing a service or selling an item. This term, in one form or another, is found 40 times in the Old Testament and 30 times in the New Testament. On one occasion Jesus asked, “For

“What could possibly be gained by ignoring or changing God’s plan of salvation?”

what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul” (Matt.

16:26)? Solomon was so wealthy that silver was as common as stones in Jerusalem (1 Kg. 10:27), yet he did not have all the wealth of the world. According to Forbes.com in March 2015, Bill Gates was the wealthiest man in the world with a fortune of over \$79 billion! However, he does not possess “the whole world.”

Jesus put the value of one eternal soul in direct focus with His question. The eternal soul was given to man by God on day six of creation (Gen. 2:7). Every human has a soul and will one day stand before God in judgment (Ecc. 12:7; Heb. 9:27). When the Lord returns in judgment the temporary things of this life will be destroyed (2 Pet. 3:10-11). What then? If the soul has not been prepared for eternity there will be no benefit to having wealth, even if one were to have the whole world. Luke 12:13-21 teaches us that it is foolish to place the emphasis in life on hoarding wealth for oneself. Solomon attempted to find happiness in wisdom (Ecc. 1:12-18) and possessions (Ecc. 2:1-11). His conclusion was, “...all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun” (Ecc. 2:11).

Jesus’ question as recorded by Matthew is in the immediate context of following Him (Matt. 16:24-26). Luke’s account is as follows: “If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross *daily*, and follow Me...For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away” (Lk. 9:23, 25)? There is no profit or advantage for a person who does not prepare his soul for eternity! The goal of one’s life should not be the pursuit of temporal things to the neglect of the soul (Lk. 12:15, 20). Jesus came to provide man with the abundant life (Jn. 10:10), and God wants man to, “love life and see good days” (1 Pet. 3:10-12). How does one prepare for eternity? How can we access the abundant life offered by Christ? Jesus said, “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me” (Jn. 10:27). The voice of Jesus is found only in the pages of the New Testament. The word of God reveals how to follow Christ and stand prepared for eternity. Paul wrote that salvation is in Christ Jesus (2 Tim. 2:10) and, that baptism puts one into Christ (Gal. 3:26-27). God’s plan for saving man from sin is clearly revealed throughout the book of Acts and in several other passages in the New Testament (Acts 2:37-42; 8:5-13; 10:44-48; Rom. 6:1-4; Col. 2:12; 1 Pet. 3:21). What could possibly be gained by ignoring or changing God’s plan of salvation? Hebrews 11:24-27 reveals that Moses understood the “gain” of forsaking the pleasures of sin in order to follow God out of Egypt. Paul wrote of himself, “Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ” (Phil. 3:8).

“For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul” (Mk. 8:36)? Our time on earth is a vapor when compared to eternity (Jas. 4:14). We must understand that there is nothing in the world that is more valuable than our own soul. With that understanding, we must then obey God’s word in order to spend an eternity with Him (Mat. 7:21-23).

Does It Profit To Serve The Lord?

by Dale Duverney

Ever think: “Why should I keep serving God?” Some in the church have faltered and failed because they faced discouragement in their service to God. In the age of instant gratification we can find ourselves discouraged when we do not see instant results in our service to God. It can be worse when it appears that our service has brought about difficulty instead of blessing!

Our plight, and that of ancient Israel, is not much different. They too became discouraged, and that only a little over 100 years after their return from captivity. When Malachi wrote, they experienced priests who were indifferent (Mal. 1:6-2:9), people who were skeptical of God’s willingness to bless them (Mal. 2:17; 3:14), and the plague of intermarriage with the heathen which threatened their future (Mal. 2:11-16; cf. Ezra 10). The enthusiasm they experienced upon their initial return to the land had fizzled out, and the people were discouraged because their expectation of a “golden age” had not been met.

God warned the people that their words had wearied Him (Mal. 2:17). They had made many accusations against God, but among the greatest was this: “It is vain to serve God: and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts” (Mal. 3:14)? Their objection was based on the wrong assumption that the wicked continued to prosper as the righteous suffered. This was the same problem David struggled with in his life. He wrote: “Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart. But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped. For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked . . . Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency.” (Psa. 73:1-3, 13). David struggled until he “went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end” (Psa. 73:17). God called Israel back to this same sacred truth as recorded in Malachi 3:16-18: “Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day

when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not.”

When we ask the question, “Does it profit us to serve God?” let us return to the sacred text and remember the answers God gave Israel and realize the answer is a resounding, “YES!” But, how does it profit us? How did it profit Israel? First, take note of

“In the age of instant gratification we can find ourselves discouraged...”

the differing fate of those who serve the Lord and those who do not! God contrasted the fate of Edom and

Israel (Mal. 1:1-5). Though Israel had been in captivity, and even though material prosperity had not come after the exile, she did survive the experience which evidenced God’s love for her. Suffering is a part of the human experience, and especially for the Christian (1 Cor. 10:13; 2 Tim. 3:12). Our fate will be an eternal inheritance with God, in a new body that will never suffer again (1 Pet. 1:4; 1 Cor. 15:23-24; 50-58; 1 The. 4:13-18; 2 Tim. 1:8-12).

Second, God called them sons and daughters (Mal. 1:6). Coupled with the promise of a new body, John reminds us “what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God” (1 Jn. 3:1). 1 John 3:2 states: “Beloved, **now** we are children of God.” This is not a promise in the future, but a present reality! It is the foundation of the promise on which our hope rests (1 Jn. 3:1-3; Rom. 8:17).

Third, they had the promise of the coming Christ (Mal. 3:1-6). For them He was the Bringer of a New Covenant and a promised cleansing. For us, we await the promise of His return, “looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God . . . according to his promise, looking for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness” (2 Pet. 3:12-13). Does it profit to serve God? Absolutely! Both in this life and the one to come (Jn. 10:10)!

Dale preaches for the Lord’s church in Harbor Springs and Rogers City, Michigan

We All Believe the Same Thing

Johnny O. Trail

We were standing in line at a “Christian” bookstore waiting to pay for a Bible that we had just purchased for our youngest son. Then, it happened. I heard someone say the words “church of Christ.” I hate to admit it, but I tend to listen in on conversations when I hear people mention the Lord’s body. The two were standing in line a few people behind us and one was explaining where she was attending church and the rationale undergirding her decision. She had explained to her grandfather that she was now attending a denominational church instead of the church of Christ. Her grandfather expressed great distress at her decision to which she retorted, “Grandpa, we all believe the same thing anyway!” Is this a valid conclusion? Do all denominations believe the same thing? What is the biblical response to denominationalism?

In the word of God, we learn that there were no denominational bodies in the first century - only the church. Paul wrote, “*There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling*” (Eph. 4:4). From the day of the church’s establishment, there was only one blood bought institution (Acts 20:28) to which one can be added through faith, repentance, and baptism to have eternal life. “Praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved” (Acts 2:47). They were not “added to” churches or different denominations. They were added to “the” church. Those outside of that body or church were not saved.

Teaching that there is “one body” or church is not popular in a postmodern world. Postmodernism teaches that all beliefs are potentially acceptable and that objective, revealed truth is unobtainable. For one to claim that God created, purchased, and intended for there to be “one body,” violates this cardinal principle. Contrary to what postmodernism teaches, Jesus said that one can know the truth. “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (Jn. 8:32). God has revealed Himself to us through His word, and we can know His will for our lives. The Bible says that within its pages we have the mind of Christ. Paul wrote, “For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ” (1 Cor. 2:16). Since we have the mind of Jesus, we can know what His will is regarding all matters spiritual.

The word *denomination* has various meanings. Denomination means “a religious grouping within a faith that has its own system of organization.” That last phrase is most interesting. A denomination has “its own system of organization.” This is separate and apart from God’s word. The church’s true system of organization is contained in God’s word. Any departure from scripture is not in accordance with the truth.

“Any departure from scripture is not in accordance with the truth.”

God is not in favor of religious division. Jesus’ prayer for the unity of all believers is recorded in John 17. Jesus said, “That they all may be one; as thou, Father, *art* in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me” (Jn. 17:21). There were no divisions between God the Father and God the Son. As a matter of fact, the church of the first century was warned to avoid people that caused division in the church. Paul wrote, “Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them” (Rom. 16:17).

A person should be able to read about their church in scripture. For the church to be Bible based, it must be properly representing God’s word. One of the hallmarks of the restoration movement is *sola scriptura*. *Sola scriptura* is Latin for “by scripture alone.” It is the doctrine that the Bible contains all knowledge necessary for salvation and holiness. I Peter 4:11 says, “If any man speak, *let him speak* as the oracles of God; if any man minister, *let him do it* as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever.” By the same token, we must endeavor to speak about biblical ideas using correct terms seasoned with salt that is gleaned from God’s word.

One cannot say that all denominations “believe the same things” when they clearly do not! The only way we can possibly make this statement is to base our practice upon scripture. If we base our practice of religion, worship, and morality upon the Bible, then there will only be “one body” (Eph. 4:4).

Johnny preaches for the Sycamore Chapel church of Christ in Ashland City, TN

CONTRIBUTORS FOR NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 2015

CHURCHES OF CHRIST

Viola (Viola, AR)	50.00
East Side on the Hill (Lexington, OK)	60.00
Pritchett (Big Sandy, TX)	100.00
Clarkridge (Clarkridge, AR)	150.00
Moody (Moody, MO)	100.00
Agnos (Agnos, AR)	100.00
Pilot (Mammoth Spring, AR)	700.00
Elizabeth (Elizabeth, AR)	100.00
Sturkie (Sturkie, AR)	100.00
Mammoth Spring (Mammoth Spring, AR)	2000.00

Gepp (Gepp, AR)	200.00
Springdale (Springdale, AR)	50.00
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Hilltop (Eufaula, OK)	50.00
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Wilene & Luceile (Franklin, AR)	35.00
J.C. Wilder (Vine Grove, KY)	20.00
Greg & Rebacca McFann (Malaga, WA)	150.00
Vera Harris (Charles City, VA)	40.00

Service Times for Mammoth Spring church of Christ

- Sunday AM Class - 10:00
- AM Worship - 10:45
- PM Worship - 6:00
- Wednesday Night Class - 7:00

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- God's Authorized Worship**
 - *Colossians 3:17* -
1. Lord's Supper - Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:23-24
 2. Prayer - Acts 12:5; Philippians 4:6-7
 3. Singing - Ephesians 5:19; Hebrews 13:15
 4. Giving - I Corinthians 16:1-2; 2 Corinthians 9:7-8.
 5. Preaching - Acts 2:42; 20:7
- The Churches of Christ**
1. The Bible is the only guide - Rom. 1:16
 2. A Biblical name - Rom. 16:16
 3. Established in Jerusalem Acts 2:1-4
 4. Established by Christ - 1 Cor. 3:11
 5. Established in 1st century - Acts 2:47
 6. The body of the saved - Eph. 5:23
 7. You can be added to the church of Christ by being baptized into Christ for the remission of sins - Acts 2:41, 47; 1 Cor. 12:13

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