

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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No. 5

Does Christ Demand Sacrifice?

by Jerry Bates

It seems many people in this country have the attitude of wanting something for nothing. They want all the material blessings others have, but they are not willing to sacrifice and work for them. They want this country to be strong and powerful, but are not willing to sacrifice to maintain that strength.

Major Sullivan Ballou of the Union Army in 1861 once wrote a letter to his wife. One paragraph that he wrote is significant.

"I have no misgivings about or lack of confidence in the cause in which I am engaged, and my courage does not halt or falter. I know how strongly American civilization now leans on the triumph of the Government, and how great a debt we owe to those who went before us through the blood and suffering of the Revolution. I am willing, perfectly willing, to lay down all my joys in this life to help maintain this Government and to pay that debt..."

A week later he made the ultimate sacrifice, his own life. In the next 130 years many others made a similar sacrifice. Often, it is not pleasant to sacrifice, but we all realize that from time to time sacrifice must be made for the country to remain strong.

The same is true in the Lord's Kingdom. We want to be part of that kingdom, but are we willing to sacrifice for it? We want God to make all the sacrifices. We bless and praise God for His grace and mercy in sending His Son to die on the cross. Yet when it is suggested that we must likewise make a sacrifice, we somehow think that it is unfair and unjust for God to expect us to give up something. Jesus made it plain that to be his disciple involves hardship and sacrifice. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" (Luke 9:23). "And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:27). The cross is not some physical

burden or illness which inevitably comes to everyone. It is the voluntary hardship or sacrifice that we make for the good of others and God's Kingdom.

The Bible is full of examples of people who made sacrifices for their faith. Hebrews 11 gives several examples of great men and women of faith. Each of them suffered hardships and sacrificed for his/her faith. John the Baptist made the ultimate sacrifice when he told Herod that it was not lawful for him to have his brother's wife (Matt. 14:4). According to tradition, all of the apostles except for John paid the same price, being put to death for their faith.

Service to God has always cost man something. David is referred to as a "man after God's own heart." He once made the statement that he would not offer a sacrifice to God that cost him nothing (2 Sam. 24:24). Each of us is to be a living sacrifice to God (Rom. 12:1). Can we be a living sacrifice if we don't give up something?

We teach our children the old proverb, "Anything worth having is worth working for." We encourage our young people to be great scholars or athletes. Yet, to be a scholar involves self-discipline and years of lonely study and work. To be a great athlete involves countless hours of practice which no one ever sees. Salvation is assuredly worth having (1 Cor. 2:9), therefore, we ought to be willing to sacrifice and work for it, doing God's will.

We should be encouraging our youth to be willing to make that sacrifice. What are you sacrificing for God? Are you willing to bring you life into conformity with the Word of God? Are you sacrificing materially so that the gospel can be spread throughout the world? Are you sacrificing your time to learn the word of God and teach your neighbor about Christ? Are you using your talents in service to God? See Mark 12:30-31.

Matthew 19:16-30 records the case of the rich young ruler coming to Christ. He also wanted to follow Jesus. But when asked to make the same sacrifice

the apostles made, he went away sorrowful. For him salvation cost too much. For many alive today salvation costs too much. The sacrifice is too great. However, Jesus promises us that if we are willing to make the sacrifice the rewards are worth it. "And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life" (Matt. 19:29). Are you willing to sacrifice for Christ?

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"You Can't Get There From Here!"



by Ted J. Clarke

You have heard the story of the man who stopped at a farm house and asked directions to a certain place. Supposedly, the farmer had heard of the place, but looked at the traveller and said, "Yeah, I know of the place, but you can't get there from here." That would be like driving on a one way street and coming to an intersection that had all of the street signs shown above. You couldn't go on straight because it says DO NOT ENTER; you can't turn right or left; nor can you make a "U" turn. You discover that you are really going the wrong way! Well, you may think that this whole idea is impossible, but it is not any more impossible than telling someone that he/she cannot get to one place from another. Yet, we sometimes think that some people cannot get to heaven because of where they are in their lives.

The truth is that anybody who wants to be saved can be saved, if they are willing to do God's will in the matter. If you know the right directions you can get to any spot in the world, assuming that you are willing to do your part. John 3:16 assures us that God truly has

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loved the whole world. Second Peter 3:9 asserts that God wants everyone to find their way to heaven. Everyone you see is a person whom God wants to be saved!

Look at those who were saved in the Scriptures. Those guilty of crucifying Christ were saved (Acts 2:36-41). Saul of Tarsus, who was a murderer and blasphemer, was saved (Acts 7:58-8:2; 1 Timothy 1:13-16). People who were homosexuals, drunkards (same as drug abusers), idol worshippers, common thieves and robbers, men and women who were sexually immoral - **all of these kinds of people were saved by the gospel and can still be saved today** - if they are willing to obey the Lord and give up their sinful ways of life! The apostle Paul, after describing the kinds of wickedness above, said to the Corinthians, "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 in the Spirit of our God" (1 Corinthians 6:11).

Brethren, let us never act as if or tell certain people that they cannot get to heaven from here, regardless of how wicked they may be. Let everyone know that they can get to heaven, give them the proper directions from wherever they are and let God's word work (Hebrews 4:12).

When you were born, you cried and the world rejoiced. Live your life in such a manner that when you die the world cries and you rejoice.

FRAIL CHILDREN OF DUST

by Burt Jones

In the twilight of the twentieth century this tired and traumatized world is satiated with tension and torment. It is a troubled world because of its troubled people. A general feeling of unrest is prevalent. "Nerves" have become the major topic of conversation and the chief concern even of those within the body of Christ. There is a stark naked element of fear running like a highly charged cable or a slithering snake through the souls of men, even though our Lord offers us rest in our fear and trouble. (II Thessalonians 7:7; Matthew 11:28). Human beings with priceless souls are being wooed by vice, crime and worldliness, led to the slaughter by the factions of the pro-murderers, or the gays and lesbians. Countless other lobbying groups, through a conduit of corrupt congressmen and senators, make us to feel as though we represent no more than cogs in a machine that may be replaced at any time at the discretion of the machine itself. The individual is being pressured, coerced, blackmailed, confused, distorted, disturbed, robbed and yet soothed to the point that he has lost his will - and is uninterested in finding the way out or back (Matthew 13:19-22).

As Gospel preachers and as Christians we are faced with going out to save a world that does not want to be saved. Brethren, there is no peace without God. There is no cause for man without God's intent, purpose and design.

Man may saturate himself with the pleasures of sin for a season (Hebrews 11:25). He may be called by presidents to dispense advice from his store of earthly wisdom, but he will not find in any one of these things the fulfillment of his soul's great yearning. He misses the most obvious of invitations. "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you; For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that knocketh shall findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened" (Matthew 7:7, 8).

We are frail, and, as the fine old hymn states, we are as feeble as frail. We are inadequate and inferior whenever we attempt to use our stamina, our moral resources. Indeed, were we to be the most righteous of the righteous, "we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away" (Isaiah 64:6).

I was in a Gospel meeting where three sets of fragile but feisty grandparents were baptized. Two of them were over seventy years of age. At a time when too many of our elderly are saying, "It's too late to teach an old dog new tricks," these good souls had seen that we were not teaching dogs and we were not engaged in tricks. They were baptized. As each couple arose after having been buried with our Redeemer, I had the unadulterated joy of gazing into the faces of three sets of seventy-year-old infants. Never shall I forget that moment!

"Frail children of dust, and feeble as frail, In Thee do we trust, nor find Thee to fail; Thy mercies, how tender! How firm to the end! Our Maker, Defender, Redeemer and Friend!"

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STICKS IN MY MIND

by David Long

Have you ever read something, like a book or an article and something that was said in that writing, stuck in your mind? Well, I was reading an article the other day and I came across a statement that has stuck in my mind. The article was entitled, "God's Evidence of Pardon," written by Stanley E. Sayers. The statement made was, "When you can turn to the Bible, lay your finger on the Scripture, and say, 'This I have done,' you can be absolutely certain God approves." What a statement and how true it is!

Now, someone may call that "law keeping" and someone may call it legalism, but the Bible calls it obedience. "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you" (Rom. 6:17). "And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, 'I know him,' and keepeth not his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected; hereby know we that we are in him" 1 John 2:3-5). "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Heb. 5:8-9). "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city" (Rev. 22:14).

To obey the Lord and the Gospel the alien sinner must: hear the word of God (Rom. 10:17), believe that God is (Heb. 11:6), believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God (John 8:24), believe the things concerning the kingdom of God (Acts 8:12), repent of their sins (Acts 17:30), confess Christ (Acts 8:37), be baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38) and be faithful in all things (Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 15:58).

To obey the Lord and be restored to God's grace the erring child of God must: repent of sins (Acts 8:22), confess those sins (1 John 1:9), pray God that those sins will be forgiven (Acts 8:22) and be faithful in all things (Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 15:58; Rev. 2:10).

To continue in God's grace and obey the Lord, the faithful must: grow – mature (2 Pet. 3:18), worship acceptably (John 4:24; Matt. 15:7-9), abound in work (1 Cor. 15:58), edify one another (1 Thess. 5:11) and endure to the end (Matt. 10:22; Heb. 12:1-2).

Can we lay our finger on the Scripture and say, "This I have done?" No doubt, in the day of judgment there will be some who thought they had done what they needed. Remember, 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. 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'"* (Matt. 7:21-23).

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HOLY WHO?

For The "What's In A Name?" File

by Jeff Jarrett

One of the great pleas of the restoration movement was to call Bible things by Bible names. The restoration leaders noted with regret that many secular terms had been imported into religion via traditions or creed books or pure pride of men. In the noble effort to restore things in accordance with the pattern of the first century church, such terms were systematically weeded out. Preachers are not called "pastor," "reverend," or "father" in the church of the Bible. Therefore, we do not practice this. There is no reference to "mass," "sacrament," or any other such term. Christians were not called

"Catholic" or "Protestant," "Baptist" or "Presbyterian." They were simply called "Christians" (Acts 11:26). The Lord's church did not bear some worldly name or the name of a human. It was called "the church" (Acts 2:47), "the church of God" (Acts 20:28), "the church of the first born" (Heb. 12:23), "the body of Christ" (1 Cor. 12:27), and "the churches of Christ" (Rom. 16:16). All of these names are Biblically approved and can be worn by those who faithfully follow the doctrine of God. (Notice some wear these names but do not reflect the truth of God's Word in what they teach. Both doctrinal purity and a scriptural name are essential.) If we are to "do all in the name of the Lord," i.e., by the authority of God (Col. 3:17), we must be faithful to call Bible things by Bible names.

Yet, for years we have heard people defend all kinds of names for denominations and other "religious" institutions, saying, "Well, there is nothing in a name. It's not important." No one truly believes this. If someone says names do not matter, ask him if he would name his son Judas or his daughter Jezebel. There is something in a name!

Most denominations bear a title which reflects a founder's name or their particular doctrinal deviation. For instance, the Lutheran church bears Martin Luther's name in spite of the fact that his dying request was that the church he founded not be named after him. "Catholic" is Latin for "universal," reflecting their belief that they are the one world church. The term "Methodist" was originally used to describe the systematic organization and methods of the original "societies" begun by John Wesley in the late seventeenth century. "Baptist" reflects the belief in baptism for the purpose of being added to the Baptist church (albeit, not for the remission of sins as taught in the New Testament [Acts 2:38]). Many other examples could be given for the various histories behind the assortment of unbiblical names.

But I found one that I think takes the prize! The name to which I refer is "Holy Alamo Christian Church®." On the surface it seems to be rather typical of denominational names but a closer look reveals a shocking arrogance which would repulse most. I wondered what the term "Holy Alamo" meant, then I read the preacher's name, "World Pastor Tony Alamo, Teacher, Author and Evangelist®." "Holy Alamo" is a reference to a self-proclaimed *"Holy Tony*

Alamo"!! Imagine that! A name is for the purpose of describing what is inside. I think I will choose to be a part of the church of Christ rather than the church of "holy Tony Alamo." What about you?

P.S. The terms *"Holy Alamo Christian Church"* and *"World Pastor Tony Alamo"* have actually been registered as trademarks!

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[Editor's Note: *Reflecting on the article above, one is reminded of what the apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 1:10-13. What did Paul, Apollos, or Cephas (Peter) do for us in comparison with what Christ did?! Nothing in comparison. Tony Alamo would not even compare favorably with the very least of the gospel preachers in the New Testament, let alone Christ. What pride and arrogance to presume to name a church after himself and then try to associate that church with Christ! But then, why call the Lord's church after any of the denominational names listed above, along with hundreds of others that could be given? Are you in a denominational church? If the name of your religious group does not honor Christ or God in its name, would you have the right to be upset at Tony Alamo? There is more to the matter of being the right church than the name, but as brother Jarrett has pointed out, there is something in the name of the Lord's church!]*

CONTRIBUTIONS CHURCHES

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| Pleasant Home Church of Christ | 100.00 |
| Murfreesboro, Ar. | |
| Church of Christ, Elizabeth, Ar. | 15.00 |
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Restoring The Code of Decency

by Neal Pollard

While holding a meeting in north Alabama, this writer had the pleasure of visiting in the home of an elder of a nearby congregation. His two teenage daughters were truly refreshing. They did not attend their high school prom, did not swim with boys at the public pool, and positively never wore clothes that were immodest. These were not "strange" girls. They were pretty, popular girls heavily involved in all kinds of school activities. They were confident and courageous. No doubt these girls will live rich, full and joyful lives.

In The Visitor, the Adamsville, Alabama church bulletin, Tim Rice writes under the date of February 21, 1995,

"A substitute teacher I know recently overheard some cheerleaders at school say something like the following:

"I feel sorry for Jane [not her real name]. She is a member of the church of Christ. She can't wear short dresses. Her parents would not let her go to the prom. Why, even when her family goes on vacation, they don't go to the beach where the action is, they go off by themselves. And she wears spandex pants when she goes swimming there. She can't go to any of the pool-parties we have because her parents don't think it's right to go mixed swimming. She doesn't smoke or do any of the fun things. And she goes to church all the time."

Will she be warped or rebellious? Will her parents' "strictness" cause her to snap or go wild? Or, have we let the voice of the world convince us that chaste, conservative and wholesome values ruin young lives?

The woman this writer married was raised like those elders' daughters and "Jane." She is "normal" in every way. She has always received great respect from world and church, male and female! She has no difficulty faithfully believing the truth about the ever-present danger of producing lust through activities like mixed swimming, dancing or brief attire (cf. Galatians 5:19; 1 Peter 4:3; 2 Corinthians 12:21; Webster's New World Dictionary definition of "lasciviousness"). She has adopted 1 Timothy 2:9 as her code of decency, being modest from the inside out and putting her emphasis on wearing the whole armor of God and not the bikinis, mini's, tight, and slight attire

of the world!

Yes, television and movies have desensitized us with half-clothed, unclothed and up close men and women, as if such were natural and acceptable. The summertime dress code of the world suggests that we are free to do whatever pleases us. The invitation of the devil's sermon is, "Come unto me, nude and uninhibited, and I will give you popularity, acceptance and freedom." Woe to the Christian who swallows that lie!

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No man or woman of the humblest sort can really be strong, gentle, pure, and good without the world being better for it, without somebody being helped and comforted by the very existence of that goodness.

- Phillip Brooks

Things go better with scripture after scripture after scripture! Read your Bible daily. Read it systematically.

AN APOLOGY

In last month's issue of the Fulton County Gospel News some "filler material" (used at the end of a column or between articles) contained remarks which were offensive to some of our women readers. The brief section was entitled, "For Men Only," and was inserted by the typesetter of the commercial firm which prints our paper, from the stock of filler material which we supply them. The typesetter used the filler mentioned above because it fit the space which needed to be filled.

I sincerely apologize to any who were offended by the content of this short piece and assure all of our readers that its inclusion in our paper was not intended. The material mentioned was not written by me or anyone connected with the FCGN. The offensive material was on the backside of another short article on the Bible which was taken from a church bulletin from another state. I failed in my editorial responsibilities in that I did not catch this brief clip and delete it from the filler material passed on to the printer.

May I assure all of our readers, especially our ladies, that there was no intention to insult or degrade the female gender and that we have nothing but the utmost respect for women. We shall try to do better in the future. - Editor

GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION

1. Hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17; Acts 16:32).
2. Believing what is taught (Mark 16:16; Hebrews 11:6).
3. Repentance (Acts 2:38; Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30).
4. Confession (Romans 10:9, 10; Acts 8:37).
5. Baptism (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; 1 Peter 3:21; Romans 6:3, 4).
6. After the above five steps, faithful Christian Living (1 Peter 2:11, 12; Revelation 2:10).

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

1. The Bible is its only guide (Romans 1:16; 1 Thess. 2:13).
2. Wears a Biblical Name (Romans 16:16).
3. Established at the right place (Isaiah 2:2,3; Acts 2).
4. Established at the right time (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2).
5. Established on the right person (Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:36).
6. Saved are in it (Ephesians 5:23; Acts 2:47).
7. Its members are enrolled in heaven (Hebrews 12:23).
8. Membership in it is obtained by obedience to God's commands including baptism (Acts 2:41-47; 1 Corinthians 12:13).

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