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"The Churches of Christ Salute You"

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Convinced, But Not Enough Courage to Stand on Conviction?

There are, no doubt, millions of people who are convinced that the Bible is God's word, that sin is wrong, that Hell is real and Heaven is precious, that there is ONLY one way to salvation; BUT lack the courage to stand for what they are convinced is right! God never intended that heaven should be for those who cannot make up their minds, or lack convictions, or are careless and lazy. Heaven is a PREPARED place for a PREPARED people who are willing to OBEY the Lord, take up their cross and follow Jesus wherever he leads! This is what one MUST do if he ever enters heaven. May we examine some examples of those recorded in the New Testament who were convinced but lacked courage to stand for what they believed to be right.

HEROD ANTIPAS KNEW THAT JOHN THE BAPTIZER WAS A MAN OF GOD AND DESIRED TO OBEY HIM! — "For Herod feared John knowing that he was a just man and holy, and observed him; and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly", Mark 6:20. Herod knew that John was right and had done his duty in reproving him and no doubt was convinced that he should put away this woman but did not have the courage to do what he was CONVINCED was right! Many today KNOW that their lives are not in harmony with God's plan of righteousness, yet will not make the extra effort to conform to these commands. This of course means eternal punishment!

FELIX TREMBLED WHEN HE SAW HIMSELF AS GOD KNEW HIM TO BE, BUT WAS WITHOUT COURAGE. — When Paul spoke to Felix about his spiritual condition and Felix looked into God's mirror for the soul; he saw himself unfit to meet God and saw the horrors of Hell and the joys of Heaven, BUT though convinced he did not obey. "And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time;

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In Jesus' Name

Paul taught the Colossians, "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus . . ." (Col. 3:17) The word speaks of being baptized in the name of Christ. (Acts 2:38; 10:48) This does not have reference to some sort of formula to be repeated before or during the baptismal service, but rather to the authority by which the act is performed. In Acts. 4:7, when the apostles were asked, "By what power or by what name have ye done this?" the question had to do with the authority by which they had acted. In reply Peter told them that it was by "the name of Jesus Christ." (verse 10)

But to act by the name of Jesus Christ means that we act by His authority. Therefore, we cannot do by the name of Christ that which Christ has not authorized. It is error to suppose that we may act according to our own opinions and wishes then sanctify the act by saying, "I do this in the name of Jesus." The seven sons of Sceva seemed to think that there was some magical power in the mere pronouncement of the name of the Lord. (Read the story in Acts 19:14-17)

To act in the name of the Lord we must have a "thus saith the Lord" for our faith and practice. Those who heard and did what He taught, Jesus called wise builders and their house stood. Those who built, but not according to Jesus' teaching are called foolish builders and their labor was wasted for their houses fell. (Matt. 7:24-27) Therefore, we should be concerned with whether we can offer a NT passage which teaches that which we are depending upon for our eternal salvation. Does the word teach those things we engage in as acts of devotion to God? It is important whether we are acting by the authority of the Lord or by our own authority.

Cliff Stewart

The Church of Christ in Viola, Arkansas, will have a gospel meeting April the 20th, through the 26th. Brother Clifford Dixon will be the speaker.

Where Are You?

Well, here I am. Where? That's a good question. Just where am I?

I'm lost in a world and a time in which I don't belong, and the devil tempts me with every step that I take.

I'm really trying to be the Christian that others believe me to be. But all around me I witness sins of others, and I know that the devil tempts me in this way. I know that I need to become a stronger and better Christian, but I can't do it alone. I find that I need God and His guidance, and so I pray:

Heavenly Father:

Hear my prayer and answer. I love Thee. Give me strength to follow in the footsteps of Thy Son. Guide my feet that they don't stumble over the gravel roads of life. I need Thee. Stand by me that the devil not o'ertake my soul nor cause me to lead others astray.

I mean not the angry words which have slipped from my unbridled tongue. Help those whom I have hurt to understand that I still love them and need their forgiveness.

Thank Thee Father for giving me life and a place in which to live. Thank Thee for the love that Thou dost freely give. Help me to give the little that I have to those who have even less.

Forgive me for those sins that I do not see. And Father, most of all, help me a better Christian be.

All these things I ask in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Can you honestly say that you do not need to say a similar prayer? If you can or even think you can, then everybody needs to pray for you. No one is perfect. There is not one single person in this whole world who can say that he is a perfect and true Christian, but everyone can pray and strive to be better Christians.

I know where I am. WHERE ARE YOU?

—Carol Bryant
(Lindale teenager)

The Fulton County Gospel News

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EDITORS: Clovis Ragsdale
and James E. Henley.

What Causes Less to Be Done for Christ Than Should Be Done?

It was the same question. It was asked two different groups. The groups were of different age bracket; they knew nothing of the question being asked another; they were not told how the other folk had answered. Yet there was a strange similarity that existed in the answer to the question, "What do you feel hinders Christians more than anything else from doing more work for the Lord?"

Those who first gave answers to the questions were in the 28-40 year age bracket—most of them married—most of them with children. From these hundred people, there came ten answers. Here are the ones they gave:

First: "We are not doing more because we shun involvement. Too many people today would like to be spectators rather than participants."

A second answer was, "We have never learned to release ourselves—therefore, do not know how to give unselfishly of ourselves to the work of Christ."

Third, one observed, "I believe we would do more if we were better prepared for our assignments and the goals expected to be accomplished were definitely outlined."

A fourth thought was, "There is lack of personal commitment and dedication on the part of too many."

The fifth was closely related when it was said, "There is a lack of personal faith and love."

The sixth answer was interesting when one voiced, "There is difficulty in determining the priorities among multiple

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good things which we might do. It's possible that we sometimes are involved in busy work—not accomplishing the major matters."

The seventh answer: "Too many of us depend on ourselves instead of depending on the Lord—this would account for lack of prayer."

Eighth, given also for a reason as to the lack of service, was the fact that, "There is a lack of scriptural knowledge that produces faith, understanding, and a desire for worship."

The ninth answer categorized, "Fear, anxiety, and poor self-image" as reasons some did not do more.

The last answer was, "We've departmentalized life—we've allowed the Lord to be Lord only of a little section—not of all of our existence."

One hundred and twenty college students were asked the same question, perhaps ten or twenty years younger than the group who gave the answers above. These able young people cited these reasons for failure to do more for the Lord: First on their list was "lack of self-discipline." The second thing they named was "materialism." Thirdly, they cited an "improper use of time—allowing the little minor things of life to captivate all energies." The fourth reason gave evidence of the power of the peer group when they said, "Some lack desire because the ones with whom they associate have no love for the Lord." They challenged older folk with the fifth observation when they stated, "There is a lack of sincerity on the part of many and a disenchantment that has been produced as they have studied the lives of leaders."

The college group felt the same "pressure of time" when they said, "There are daily obligations that seem to take priority over service we'd like to render the Lord."

They closed their observation by saying, "There is a lack of study, prayer and Christian association that belongs to all ages—ours is not exempted."

Jim Bill McInteer

"Forget-Me-Nots"

"Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine?" (Luke 17:17).

Old Mrs. McCoy was an incurable grumbler. Nothing pleased her. One fall she had an excellent apple crop; each apple a picture of perfection. A neighbor said to her, "I know you're happy; I've heard about your wonderful apple crop." Mrs. McCoy glared at him as she replied: "I guess they'll do... but where's the rotten 'uns fer the pigs?" It is impossible to please some. If it rains they wish the sun would shine; if the sun shines they wish it would rain.

Ingratitude is a despicable sin. Christ cured ten lepers, but only one of them returned to say "thank you." A noted commentator says, concerning this story:

"There is no story in all the gospels which so poignantly shows man's ingratitude. The lepers had come to Jesus with a desperate longing; He had cured them, and nine never came back to give thanks. So often, once a man has got what he wants, he never comes back."

Ingratitude often results from a short memory. Here is a bouquet of "Forget-Me-Nots" which should be gathered by each:

(1) Don't forget your parents. There was a time in life when we would have died if we had been neglected for a single day. And there were many years when we were totally dependent upon our parents for everything. Yet, many people forget this debt they owe, and consider the needs of their aged parents an unbearable nuisance.

(2) Don't forget your fellowmen. At some point most of us have been helped immeasurably by a friend. He encouraged us, inspired us, motivated us, had confidence in us... when without it we might not have made it. At that moment we didn't think we would ever forget. Now that better days are here we not only have forgotten, but in some instances even talked against the one who "stuck his neck out" for us.

(3) Don't forget God. In a time of desperate need we fervently prayed... God answered... time passed... we forgot.

I'm rich! I am saved! I am happy!

I've health and prosperity!

I've friends! I have doors ever open!

The Lord has been mindful of me!

Listen "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits" (Psalm 103:2).

—Joe R. Barnett

So, You Now Have An Excuse For Not Attending The Services of the Church!

At various times I talk to some one who has turned his back on God, with the personal excuse that I don't attend "there" any more, "because"????? Then comes forth his EXCUSE, not a REASON in the word of GOD! Let us at this time examine some of these excuses which I have heard.

"THERE IS SOME ERROR BEING TAUGHT THERE". — Well this may or may not always be true, depending on who is talking. But for the reason of wanting to be fair let us say that there is error being taught; then WHAT IS MY DUTY? TO leave is to turn it over to the Devil and leave many of the Lord's lambs to the "sheep in wolves' clothing". Are we not the shepherds of those who are babes in Christ? When the wolf comes should we take cover, or should we use the "sword of the spirit" on this error and fight it to a finish? There was error in the church at Corinth and there was error in the churches of Galatia. Did Paul tell them to LEAVE the church? HE DID NOT! HE TOLD THEM HOW GOD WISHED FOR UNITY AND HOW THE TRUTH WOULD PRODUCE UNITY! What did Paul tell Timothy to do when he ran into error (false teachers)? Did he tell him to LEAVE the church to the wolves? AGAIN, HE DID NOT! Paul "CHARGED" Timothy to "Preach the word; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine", II Tim. 4:1-5 SO IF THERE IS ERROR IN THE CHURCH, STAY IN IF POSSIBLE AND TRY TO SAVE AS MANY OF GOD'S PEOPLE AS POSSIBLE. IF ANY ONE LEAVES LET IT BE THOSE WHO TEACH ERROR. NEVER, NO, NEVER, DESERT THE LORD'S CHURCH TO THE DEVIL! JESUS DID NOT GIVE IN TO THE DEVIL BUT PUT THE DEVIL ON THE RUN WITH "THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT". GOD'S WORD! So, my friend, if there is ERROR in the church where you worship, or error being taught there, GOD DEMANDS OF YOU THAT YOU DEFEND THE TRUTH, NOT RUN FROM THE DEVIL! A battle for truth has never been won by running away. So if you ran away, run twice as fast back to face the Devil and put him on the run. THAT IS GOD'S WAY, IS IT NOT ALSO YOUR WAY?

"WE DO NOT PLAN TO BE HERE LONG". — Well, what are you going to

do with God while you are here? Do you not need His love? Do you not need his blessings? How do you know but what you may die while here? THEN WHAT? Friend it is not where but what that counts! If you are converted to God he expects you to be loyal ANY WHERE and he can USE you ANY WHERE and you NEED him ANYWHERE! The church NEEDS you but you NEED the church FAR MORE than it needs you. For nearly nineteen hundred years the Lord's church and Lord got along fine WITHOUT me, and at any time it may please the Lord to get along without me again, BUT NOW, NOR AFTER DEATH, I CANNOT GET ALONG WITHOUT THE LORD! The ONLY way he will accept me into that heavenly home, or family, is for me to not just profess, but to BE a member of the earthly family (church II Tim. 3:15) which means I am in the family and work in behalf of the family where ever I am! YOU MEAN YOU ARE NOT A PART OF THE LORD'S FAMILY AT THIS TIME? JUST TURN IT OFF AND ON LIKE A LIGHT BULB? WHAT IF YOU DIE WHILE THE LIGHT IS OUT? DON'T YOU THINK YOU HAD BETTER GET A LITTLE POWER IN THAT BULB ALONG ABOUT NOW?

"PEOPLE HERE DON'T SEEM TO UNDERSTAND ME". — Now that is sad! Do you understand the people? Do you understand the Lord? You may be sure that the Lord understands you, but you need to be just as sure that you understand the Lord. In the times of the early Christians they were driven from place to place and to places where there was NO church meeting. They began preaching the Gospel and established churches wherever they went. THEY WERE NOT CONCERNED ABOUT WHETHER PEOPLE UNDERSTOOD THEM OR NOT, BUT WERE CONCERNED ABOUT PEOPLE WHO DID NOT UNDERSTAND THE WORD OF THE LORD! So they PREACHED the word that others might UNDERSTAND THE LORD. Stephen, Paul and Barnabas, as well as many others, were NOT UNDERSTOOD by people but they had an obligation to God and found opportunity to discharge that obligation to the glory of God and the salvation of LOST SOULS. So you see you have become a part of the problem of lost souls, not a part of the solution! Jesus was the most mis-understood person in the world, by friend and foe, yet he OBEYED God in ALL things and is now WITH God. YOU TOO WILL OBEY GOD IF YOU EVER DWELL

CONVINCED (from page 1)

when I have a convenient season, I will call thee", Acts 24:25. Yes Felix was convinced, but he did not have the courage to take his stand with God, for fear of his job and what others would think and say. But as far as the Bible record is concerned he never had a "convenient season", meaning a time when it would require NO sacrifice, dedication, or courage to step out and be counted among the faithful of the Lord. IF YOU ARE WAITING FOR SUCH CONVENIENT SEASON, IT WILL NEVER COME! God did not plan it that way. A man must DENY himself, CONFESS and FOLLOW Christ! It is NEVER easy, BUT THE INCENTIVES ARE WORTH THE SACRIFICE AND THEN SOME!

HEROD AGRIPPA WAS ALMOST PERSUADED TO STAND ON HIS CONVICTIONS. — As Paul stood before Agrippa and convinced him with the Scriptures of the Christ and His plan of salvation, Agrippa was moved ALMOST to take his stand with God, along side of Paul. But again if he ever found an effortless time to do so the Bible does not declare. Paul said to Agrippa, after explaining the Scriptures to him; "King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest. Then Agrippa said unto Paul, "Almost thou persuaded me to be a Christian", Acts 26:27-28. At most services of the church there are those on the pews who ALMOST surrender to the Saviour but the Devil seems to stand on their feet and they leave the building ALMOST persuaded, and their hearts a little HARDER for saying "NO" to the waiting Saviour again. The next time the heart will be a little, yes only a little, less sensitive to the Gospel call. The Devil, little by little, through the hardening process of the heart, is stealing a soul for his Hell! So later the heart is too hard to reach and the plea is in vain for the Devil has removed another from among those who were subjects worthy of salvation.

WHAT DOES THIS ALL MEAN? — I think we can sum it all up in an example during the personal ministry of Jesus. With his humility, sacrifice, and mighty power over the Devil and all manner of disease, He convinced the people beyond the shadow of a doubt that he WAS the Christ, yet they would not obey him, John 12:42-43.

WITH GOD AND JESUS. DO YOU UNDERSTAND THIS? THEN DO SOMETHING!

Keeping Our Speech Pure

There are many passages of scripture which teach Christians of necessity of keeping our speech pure and clean in the presence of others. Eph. 4:29 states that we are not to let corrupt communication proceed out of our mouths. Christians are constantly on trial before the world and if we do or say things that are wrong we are immediately judged as a hypocrite. This weakens our influence and hardens the heart of the accuser. James speaks of the tongue as a little member, which boasteth great things. A few careless words can turn some soul so hard against the truth that no manner of teaching can bring that person to Christ. James 3:6, says the "tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity; so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature, and it is set on fire of Hell." As a part of our body, the tongue is a small organ, but the sin and heartache that it is possible of producing is staggering.

Some people pride themselves on being able to speak their mind without any kind of censure or forethought. They do not take into consideration the feelings of others. This rank selfishness. If we differ with some one we should present our side in kind speech. More people will be won to our way of thinking by showing love than will by our speaking in a contemptable manner. People who are careless with fire are a menace to society. The person who is careless with what he says can be a menace to the reputation of individuals. Character assassination is sinful in God's sight and even the law of the land protects people against slanderous speech. A good rule to follow is to think twice before we speak. If this policy is followed many things would be kept locked in our hearts, which, if put into words would cause trouble.

The tongue expresses the sentiment of the heart, or mind of a person. James 3:10, 11, "out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren these things ought not to be so. Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter?" There is no excuse for Christians to use foul language. It brings shame on the name of Jesus Christ and shame on the person who uses such. Our speech indicates our true character. When we meet strangers we get a pretty good indication of what their personality is like by hearing them express themselves. The person whose

Our Heart's Desire

THAT ALL MEN OBEY CHRIST

In Matthew, chapter 17, we read where Moses and Elias were speaking with Christ. Peter, like so many of us, was excited at the occasion and suggested that three tabernacles be built, one for Moses, one for Elias and one for Jesus, thus honoring each on an equal basis. But God spoke from heaven and settled the matter. Said He, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him", Verse 5.

DO YOU KNOW?

Did you know that that is ALL the entire churches of Christ are trying to do, to encourage ALL MEN to HEAR CHRIST? We have no creed to guide us, EXCEPT THE BIBLE, GOD'S HOLY WORD ALONE! We just mean to READ, to STUDY, to UNDERSTAND, to KNOW, TO BELIEVE and then to OBEY the WORD OF GOD, THE BIBLE! Can we do less? WHO will step forward and say that this is wrong? Who will dare to place the creeds of men before the word of God? This is VAIN worship, Matt. 15:7-9. We LOVE ALL MEN AND WANT THEM TO BE SAVED BY OBEYING THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST, ROM. 1:16. THIS IS OUR HEART'S DESIRE AND WE WORK DAY AND NIGHT TO TEACH AND ENCOURAGE MEN TO READ AND UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE. WILL YOU NOT BE ONE TO SAY "AMEN" to this plea?

interest is in worldly things soon makes known what he thinks is most important in life. In Matt. 12:36, Christ said that every idle word men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. This is a sobering statement by our Lord and should cause us to be more careful of what we say. The person who likes to tell dirty jokes should realize that he is telling the Lord the same as the person who he is addressing. I am sure that not many would be bold enough to speak of such in the presence of the Saviour. In closing let us hear the advice Paul gave Titus in Titus 2:8, where he told him to be a pattern of good works and sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you.

Clovis Ragsdale

This and That

The weekend storms in January played havoc with church attendance in North Arkansas and South Missouri.

Two or three congregations in this area are looking for a preacher to work full time.

This paper would like the date and speakers of any meeting or lectureship to be held in the coming months. We need this information by the twenty-fifth of the preceding month of publication.

We know of several congregations who have begun personal work campaigns. Many believe that personal contact by individual members offer the best means of leading people to Christ in our present day. Meetings, radio and TV programs, tracts, and etc. will be more effective when backed up by an active personal work program. It also helps the christian to become more involved in the work of the church.

The city council of a Michigan town recently passed legislation under which parents may be jailed or fined for the criminal acts of their children. If this law was enacted nationwide it would greatly reduce juvenile delinquency which has become one of America's most plagueing problems.

Mrs. Madalyn Murray O'Hair of Austin, Texas, an avowed atheist, who objected to the astronauts reading from the Bible while in space has a new project. She and her husband have established a church to object to tax free status of church property. Because church property is tax free, some religious groups have taken advantage of the law to engage in business projects for profit. This should be stopped. Tax exemption on property where people worship God is part of our American Heritage. We hope no one will take seriously this latest assault on God fearing citizens of our country. After banning prayer and Bible reading in schools, we don't know what to expect next.

The Childrens Home of Paragould reports that they are desperately in need of more foster homes to take care of adolescent children. If any of our readers desire to have foster children they would do well to contact the home.

People who have records players can now purchase both the Old and New Testaments on record for a reasonable price. It is an excellent way to study the Bible, especially for housewives who can go about their housework while a talented reader unfolds the scriptures verse by verse. It is also a great help to those who are poor readers.