

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

Christ’s Teaching Today

By Joe R. Price

Can we properly apply the words of Jesus to the lives of Christians today? Some brethren are preaching that since Jesus lived under the Law of Moses, and since His main audiences were Jews, that what Jesus was really doing in His earthly teaching was instructing Jews in the law of Moses. Then, these modern-day exegetes conclude that we are taking Jesus out of context when we apply His personal teachings to all men (including Christians) today.

For instance, the advocates of this doctrine tell us that Jesus was merely teaching the law of Moses in the sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7). They have relegated the sermon which may be rightly characterized as the charter of the kingdom of Christ to a discourse *on “a shadow of the good things to come”* (Heb. 10:1). While it is true that Jesus came to fulfill the law of Moses, it is also clear that He distinguishes Himself as superior to that law (Matt. 5:17-18, 22, 28, 32, 34, 39, 44; 7:28-29).

There appears to be an ulterior motive for reaching such a preposterous conclusion about the personal teachings of Jesus. Those advocating this doctrine are the same ones who are compromising Jesus' plain teaching on divorce and remarriage (one man for one woman for life, with one reason for divorce and approved remarriage - Matt. 19:1-9). Jesus' teaching is for every person who marries (*“from the beginning,” “man and woman,” “whosoever”*). Yet, we are being told that we cannot apply Matthew 19:9 to Christians because Jesus was teaching Jews what the law of Moses said on divorce and remarriage. My brethren, this is nothing more than twisting God's word (2 Pet. 3:16)!

Where will this perverted view of Christ's personal teaching lead us? I suppose we cannot warn all men (including Christians) against human traditions since Jesus spoke His warning to Jews (Matt. 15:1-9). What about His teaching on church discipline in Matthew 18:15-17? Why would He speak of the *“church”* to Jews if He was teaching them the Law of Moses? Ultimately, none of Jesus' words would apply to our lives!

This doctrine is self-serving and foreign to the word of truth. Beware the doctrines of men! ■

IDENTIFYING FALSE TEACHERS

By Joe R. Price

There is a tendency these days to reject preaching that gets too specific, that calls the names of false teachers, that exposes the errors of men. While the Bible continues to command us to *“preach the word...reprove, rebuke...”*, there are those who will not endure sound doctrine nor the opposition of false doctrine (2 Tim. 4:2-4).

A personal test on this matter can be found in the article on page one of today's bulletin. How did you react when you read a specific quote, the man's name who said it, and why his teaching is false? Do such personal identifications upset you? Would you prefer only hearing *“principles”* while avoiding specific doctrinal applications? If so, you are dangerously close to the crowd described in 2 Timothy 4:3-4.

This is not to say that under every circumstance the false teacher must be publicly named for his teaching to be effectively exposed and opposed. Such is not the case (cf. 1 Cor. 15:12). But at times, it is necessary for several reasons. These reasons include:

(1) Clearly identifying error and who is teaching it. An example of this is Paul's naming of Hymenaeus and Phile-

tus in 2 Timothy 2:16-18. By naming these men, Paul made it clear that their doctrine was overthrowing people's faith and had to be opposed. Therefore, we are given scriptural prerogative to do the same thing today. At times, we must.

(2) Giving a warning against sin. This is done in 1 Corinthians 5:1. Paul did not give the man's name — they all knew who he was talking about. Such personal identification was needed to warn the brethren not to have fellowship with sin through any conduct which would indicate support (i.e., social contact, 1 Cor. 5:2, 9-11). To avoid fellowship with sin we must know what the sin is and who is committing it (2 Jn. 10-11). This is a matter of protecting the body of Christ from the influences of error, which at times requires personally identifying the purveyor of error (1 Cor. 5:6-7).

(3) Trying to save the false teacher and those he influences. Unless we are willing to identify and approach the one who teaches error, how shall we persuade him with the truth? Perhaps he simply has not been taught the truth (Acts 18:24-26). Peter's public conduct occasioned Paul's public confrontation because he ***“walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel”*** (Gal. 2:14). Paul was very specific. At times, so must we (cf. Phil. 4:9).

A number of reasons are offered to oppose this approach to contending for the faith (Jude 3). Some prominent offerings are:

(1) It is not edifying. Those who are uncomfortable with naming the names of false teachers tell us that to do so “tears down rather than builds up.” Those who have specifically identified false teachers and their false doctrine have been labelled “trouble-makers” and are accused of “running people away.” That is nothing new (cf. Elijah and Ahab in 1 Kgs. 18:17-18). If it is really true that by its very nature such an approach is not edifying, then we must include Jesus, Paul and John to the list of “troublemakers” (Matt. 23:2-3; 2 Tim. 2:16-18; 3 Jn. 9-10). In Acts 20:28-32, after warning of future false teachers, Paul commended them to the ***“word of His grace”*** which would edify and save them. Edification is compatible with warnings against false teachers.

(2) It is not showing love toward others. This is heard from those who confuse Biblical love with an emotional feeling. They believe that if someone's feelings are hurt, then they have not been treated lovingly. (Do you suppose the scribes and Pharisee's feelings were hurt after hearing what Jesus said about them in Matthew 23?) No, true love seeks the best interests of its object. True love for one another is walking after the Lord's commandments (2 Jn. 5-6). Love does not overlook sin, it helps to overcome it through exposure and repentance (Gal. 6:1; Jas. 5:19-20). Who truly loved Peter in Galatians 2:11-14, the Judaizers who supported his conduct toward the Gentiles, or Paul, who confronted him about his error? Obviously, Paul did. Do not be afraid to ***“speak the truth in love”*** (Eph. 4:15).

(3) Since nobody is 100% doctrinally correct, we should not make an issue out of doctrinal differences. This person fails to appreciate two things about truth: first, that it can be understood correctly, and secondly, that God expects us to know it and to abide in it (Eph. 3:3-4; 5:17; Jn. 8:31-32; 1 Tim. 2:3-4; 2 Jn. 9). This approach to unity in spite of doctrinal diversity eliminates the Bible as the final word on faith and doctrine. Therefore, anyone who dares to expose and oppose the false teacher and his teaching is seen as *“legalistic,” “credalistic,”* and having a *“party spirit.”* Nothing much has changed since Galatians 1:6-10 was written. We can understand the Bible, and when we do, we will understand it alike. Otherwise, the curse in Galatians 1 against false teachers is meaningless.

We must not be afraid to confront false teachers and their doctrinal errors. Such shows love for truth, for lost souls and for those who teach error. Do not be convinced otherwise (Rev. 2:2-3). — ***The Spirit's Sword***, May 18, 1997, Volume 1.14. ■

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A Few Thoughts On, “Every Part Does It's Share”
Ephesians 4:16, NKJV

The past few months have been a great challenge for all the Washington Street church of Christ members. What has taken place during this period of time is unprecedented.

In August we lost one of our dear sisters we all knew, respected, and loved. She leaves a void and was a great blessing to all who knew her. We all continue to be blessed by her teaching, example, encouragement and gentle rebukes.

Next, a number of our members were stricken by the evil Covid-19 virus. Most are on the mend. Starting in the last week of August, we discontinued to meet to allow the sick to recover. While this may be a discouraging time, it is for **“ten days”** (Rev. 2:10), only temporary and will end eventually.

However, let us focus on the words of the beloved Apostle Paul who taught great truths concerning to Lord’s church by comparing the church to the physical body (1 Cor. 12:12-31; Eph. 4:1-16). In 1 Corinthians 12:27 Paul wrote, **“Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.”** Each member of the physical body has a role and responsibility, to do its part **“just as He pleased.”** In Ephesians 4:16 Paul wrote, **“from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love”** (NKJV).

Notice Paul makes an application here in his letter to the Ephesians that the whole body functions properly when each individual member fulfills its God designed duties. Focusing on this truth, what do we as individual members need to do to do **“its (our) share”** as it applies to the work of the *local* church? Consider these points:

First, be present at every service possible. It is understood that various situations arise that can hinder attendance such as health issues. But, I am referring to those who sin *willingly* by forsaking the assembling of the Saints (Heb. 10:25-26). We are commanded to **“consider one another in order to stir up love and good works”** by **“not forsaking the assembly of ourselves, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.”** Why is this so hard for some to do?

Second, be of a willing mind like the saints in Berea. They are described – **“These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so”** (Acts 17:11; cf. Jn. 5:39). Remember, there are false teachers in the world and even among our own brethren (Gal. 1:6-9; Matt. 7:15-20; 2 Pet. 2:1-3; Jude 1:4). We are living in **“perilous times”** (2 Tim. 1-5). Remember the two articles by brother Price in this issue.

Third, be prepared to teach and do the Lord’s work in the congregation you are a member of. *Men* – be prepared to teach classes, lead singing, lead prayers, serve at the Lord’s table, make announcements, preach when you have the opportunity to do so. Have a lesson prepared. Step up to the plate when there is a need in any of these areas. It should be the desire of the men of the congregation to fill-in when there is a vacancy. Too often, some are *unwilling* to do so. This is a sad commentary when men of the congregation are unwilling to fill a vacancy, especially to preach a lesson! *Women* – teach the younger women (Titus 2:3-5). Call the sick and those who are not in attendance and see if they have a need. *Children* – **“Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth”** (Eph. 6:1-3; Col. 3:20).

Fourth, read and study God’s word daily. To be approved of God, we must read his word (Eph. 3:1-5). Give attention to reading (1 Tim. 4:13) which is the first and necessary part of obtaining God’s approval (2 Tim. 2:15). Properly applying God’s word requires much study! If you don’t study, you’re setting yourself up to be deceived. The apostle Paul warned about this hazard which started in the garden of Eden (Gen. 3; 1 Tim. 2:14; 1 Cor. 6:9; 15:33; Gal. 6:7; 2 Tim. 3:13; Titus 3:3; Rev. 19:20). If you are deceived, the blame starts with you. Notice that Paul’s admonition to **“be not deceived,”** is a command, not an option! **Note:** If you are reading the using the **2021 Daily Bible Reading Program** I supplied at the beginning of the year, you should have compiled the readings for week thirty-nine this week. Where are you in *your* daily Bible reading? Do *your* homework!

Fifth, pray for one another daily. Prayer is power. When we pray according to God’s word, we are communicating with our Creator. Paul wrote, **“Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God”** (Phil. 4:6). Take the time to read and study these passages on prayer – Romans 12:12; Ephesians 6:18; Col. 4:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:17; James 5:15-16; 1 Peter 4:7). There are so many other passages that could be considered, but these are key.

There are so many points to consider about doing our **“share”** as a member of the body of Christ. We all understand the truth as it relates to the physical body, but do we appreciate the application Paul made concerning our role as members individually of his spiritual body? **“Think on these things”** my beloved brethren. – **tgm** ■

Service Times - Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM - Wednesday: 7:00 PM

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