

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

Not Ashamed of the Power of the Gospel

By Leland R. Ping

One of the most quoted and powerful verses of Paul’s letter to the saints in Rome is found in Romans 1:16 when the inspired apostle wrote the following: *“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.”*

Packed into this short passage are three valuable lessons that apply to us today.

First, there are ZERO reasons to be ashamed of the gospel. But, because we’re humans, we are sometimes prone to “shying” away from it and perhaps wanting to substitute its simple message for a man-made set of ideas. The gospel message of salvation for all men is simple, straightforward, and easy to grasp. But, we as men sometimes complicate its simplicity.

Second, the power of the gospel is the gospel itself. Not you – not me. You may be good at presenting its contents and I may be talented in explaining it all. But, the credit belongs to the Lord and His good news. That’s where the power lies – always has and always will be.

Finally, the gospel’s power does not discriminate. We might show partiality as humans and, we sometimes do. But not the good news of the Lord and Savior. It is powerful enough to see through race, gender, cultural differences, and the like. We must remember this fact when we think about teaching someone or inviting them to study or worship. Let’s be aware of the gospel and its great power to save all—and that means ALL—mankind. ■

Traveling Without God

By John Humphries

There was a very popular song that made the top charts in 1969. It was called “I Did It My Way.” The song boasted that all through life the singer did everything their own way. There is no mention of God or God’s way. It clearly promotes the idea that we determine our own standard of morality, ethics, and how we live our life. It is the old situation ethics idea that is also called the new morality. There is no objective standard (such as the Scriptures), but each person becomes a law unto themselves. It is practical atheism—living as though there is no God and therefore no divine, eternal accountability. This rebellion against the authority of God over His creation (and thus over each of us) is not anything new or novel. It has been around since humanity was created by our Maker.

In the Book of Judges, the statement is made several times and finally summed up stating, *“Everyone did what was right in his own eyes”* (Judg. 21:25). Judges details numerous occurrences of individuals and groups following their own lustful, covetous, violent ways and not the way of the Lord. The Book records one disaster after another, as people “did it my way” and committed one sin after another. The Book of Judges teaches the lesson that when man rejects God and his law, ungodliness and unrighteousness will take over resulting in rampant violence and immorality. The ugliness and vileness of godless, unrighteous humanity on display!

Jeremiah also dealt with the same problem. Israel (not the faithful remnant) had forgotten God and His law and

were living the song “I Did It My Way” and were seriously angering God in the process (Jer. 2:32; 4:8; 5:30-31; 6:13; 7:30-31). When Jeremiah exhorted them to return to God’s way and walk therein, they replied, **“We will not walk in it”** (Jer. 6:16-17). The people were each saying, “I’ll do it my way!” But Jeremiah further warned that, **“The way of man is not in himself; it is not in man who walks to direct his own steps”** (Jer. 10:13). The Proverbs warn, **“There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death”** (Prov. 14:12).

Any way but the Lord’s way, as revealed in His word, is a pathway of darkness and eternal ruin **“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path”** (Ps. 119:105). **“To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them”** (Isa. 8:20). To forsake the word of God (His way) and go one’s own way, is to walk in darkness. We must walk in the light of God’s revelation in order to have our sins forgiven through the blood of Christ (1 John 1:7). The broad way of “I’ll do it my way” leads to destruction (Matt. 7:13-14).

“And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God” (John 3:19-21).

The Lord accurately describes our world today. Multitudes love the darkness of “I will do it my way” and reject the Lord’s way of truth (John 14:6). They are traveling without God and His guidance. They are sadly on a collision course with the judgment of God! ■



Public Prayers

By Greg Gwin

Prayer is frequently referred to as ‘talking to God.’ The very nature of the act makes it a very personal thing. It is something that every Christian should engage in several times throughout each day.

But there is also such a thing as ‘public prayer.’ We have reference to prayers that are made when we assemble together with other saints. Several passages in the book of Acts show that it was a common practice among first century Christians to join together in prayer (1:24; 4:31; 12:12; 20:36; 21:5). In these ‘public prayers’ it is obviously necessary for one to ‘lead’ or direct the thoughts of the entire congregation.

Here are some suggestions for the one who is leading in public prayer:

- It is especially important to speak so everyone can hear you. How can you ‘lead’ others if they cannot hear what you are saying!
- Someone has offered this good hint: speak so that a person in the farthest corner of the building could hear you – then everyone else will, too.
- Be sure that your prayers are directed to God the Father through Jesus (Col. 3:17).
- Public prayers do not necessarily have to be long. The model prayer, often called the Lord’s Prayer, has only 65 words (Matt 6:9-13).
- Remember the warning about praying to be **“seen of men”** (Matt. 6:5).

For others in the assembly:

- Remember that this is not a passive activity. While one is ‘leading’ in the prayer, you should also be actively praying to the Father.
- After the prayer has concluded, it is entirely appropriate and scriptural for the other men to add their “Amen” (1 Cor. 14:16). Doing so indicates agreement with that which has been prayed. We very much encourage this Biblical practice! ■

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

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