

Safford Church of Christ

3888 S Hwy 191, Safford, AZ 85546

3 November 2013

Topics

A.M. Bible Class: The Holy Spirit and Us

A.M. Lesson: Eternal Life or Eternal Punishment?

Matthew 25:46

P.M. Lesson: The Servant of The Lord

Isaiah 49

Wednesday: Singing Night

Pulpit Evangelist

Ken Knowlton: 428-3494

Elders

Ben Atchley: 428-2246

Greg Briggs: 428-8756

John Cunningham: 428-0895

Sunday Bible Class	10:00 A.M.
Sunday Morning Worship	11:00 A.M.
Sunday Evening Worship	6:30 P.M.
Wednesday Evening Class	6:30 P.M.
Thursday Ladies Bible Class	10:00 A.M.

The Thankful Exchange

Gordon Macdonald

Leadership Journal, Fall 2013

[excerpt]

St. Paul, writing to the Colossians, employed the phrase abounding-in-thanksgiving as part of his challenge for them to grow into true Christian maturity. "Be rooted ... built up ... strengthened in the faith," he wrote. Those words I get. But then he added "abounding in thanksgiving." The thankful exchange. Why thanksgiving and not abounding in generosity, or love, or patience, or courage? I can't say, really. Except, maybe, that Paul regarded the power of aggressive gratitude as way up the list when describing the grounded and mature Christ-

follower.

Thanksgiving and praise were chose to being synonymous in Paul's way of thinking. Writing to Roman Christians, Paul said that people who do not honor or thank god fall into spiritual catastrophe. Maybe Paul was saying that honoring and thanking are at the core of all relationships: beginning with one's connection with God and moving on to family, friends, community, and whatever organization we serve or lead.

One day the Lord healed ten lepers. While nine of the ten immediately headed out to rejoin their friends and family, one returned to the scene of the healing to say thank you to Jesus.

And that one, the story-teller adds, "was a Samaritan." Call it a backhanded way of saying that the other nine ingrates were probably Jews who, it is implied, should have known better.

"Where are the other nine?" Jesus asked. Did he ask because he really didn't know where they had gone? I don't think so.

Perhaps Jesus asked because he wished to etch on the soul of his disciples the notion that no human transaction where value of some kind has been offered – in this case a healing – is ever complete without the thank you exchange.

Do Churches Alienate Intellectuals?

Stephen Mattson, <http://sojo.net/>
[excerpt]

Recently, it's been said that smarter people prefer not to go to church or believe in God, but maybe part of the problem is that churches won't let them in — or they've already kicked them out! Here are few of the main reasons intellectual believers are often rejected by faith communities.:

1) Churches Prefer Certainty Over Doubt.

By their very nature, intellectuals are curious. They analyze, theorize, and love to ask questions. These attributes are often criticized by church leaders and seen as an attack on traditional and established institutionalized beliefs. Innocent inquires are often met with an “How dare you question what we say?!” type of response, often followed up by cold-hearted exclusion and derision.

Many churches stubbornly hold theological, political, and social positions simply because they've always been that way, and changing them would be admitting defeat. Change itself is viewed as dangerous.

The amazing thing is that Jesus condemned those who were the most certain about their beliefs — the Pharisees. And much of Christ's ministry revolved around trying to get people to change! Maybe we should start doing the same.

In many faith communities, certainty is preferred over doubt, answers are preferred over questions, compliance is preferred over objections, contentment is preferred over conflict, and conformity is preferred over disruption. Oftentimes, intellectuals simply give up on the church not because they don't have faith, but simply because they're ostracized by church leaders and excluded from their faith communities.

What Kind of God is This?

In 1 Kings 18, we read of the astounding showdown between Yahweh's prophet Elijah and a bunch of Baal prophets. Yahweh answers Elijah's prayer in a loud and inspiring way. The result was that the people of Israel believed Yahweh as the only God and they assisted Elijah in slaying the Baal prophets. In some of my reading about this text I encountered some very insightful comments I wish to share. The comments come from Terance Fretheim's commentary on First and Second Kings, Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox. -ns

One might be tempted to think that this story, in contrasting Yahweh with idols, emphasizes Yahweh's freedom. But more to the point here is the concern for God's commitment, which by definition entails a self-limitation of freedom. God promised to send rain. God honors the relationship with the prophet; God remembers commitments made to Abraham, Isaac, and Israel (v. 36) by responding to that particular formulation in the prophetic prayer. God acts so that

their hearts might be turned back to him, “so that his people may know” that Yahweh is indeed God alone. [God acts in faithfulness to the relationship of commitment he has with Israel.]

This story ought not be used to suggest that “God cannot lose in any contest.” To be consistent, such a perspective would have to claim that there was no loss for God in the apostasies of Solomon or Jeroboam or anyone else in this spiraling downfall of Israel. The alternative is for apostasy to be considered the will of God. And, if that, God has no business being jealous or angry at what happens. Apostasy such as we encounter in these texts means that the will of God is resistible. And if it is resisted, that is a loss for God and the occasion for divine grief (see Ps. 78:40; Eph. 4:30) (Fretheim, 105-106).

TV Bad for Marriage

Do you want an easy way to keep romance alive in your marriage? Turn off the television. That's the advice from researcher Dr. Jeremy Osborn from Albion College in Michigan. Osborn tracked 390 married couples in his study “When TV and Marriage Meet.”

In the study, couples answered questions about their satisfaction with their spouse, relationship expectations, level of commitment to the marriage, TV viewing frequency, and how much they believed that TV relationships were actually realistic. Overall, the study found a simple pattern: when belief in TV romances goes up, satisfaction with your actual romantic relationship goes down. In other words, the “on-again, off-again relationships on TV shows – built up by sweeps weeks and season finales – impact what you think a wife or [husband] should be.”

From Preachingtoday.com, Leadership Journal, Science Daily.
<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2012/09/120918121322.htm>

Prayer List:
Healing: Jerry Robinson's mother Norma. Mike and Sandy Cavasos, Ben Atchley, Faye Atchley, Nicolas and Annie Self, Jonda Gardner, Dave Morse, Richard Tuey.

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<http://saffordchurchofchrist.org>

