

Safford Church of Christ

3888 S Hwy 191, Safford, AZ 85546

7 September 2014

I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the LORD!" Psalm 122:2

Topics

A.M. Bible Class:

Different gifts—talents (Romans 12:4-8)

A.M. Lesson:

The mystery of God revealed (Ephesians 3:1-13)

P.M. Lesson:

God rescues Godly men (2 Peter 2)

Wednesday:

Manasseh's folly (2 Kings 21)

Pulpit Evangelist

Ken Knowlton: 428-3494

Elders

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.

Sola Scriptura

Neil Short

Have visions and dreams from God ceased? If they have, then we can dismiss as false any dream or vision a person claims to have had. If they have not—or if we cannot prove that they have—how would we respond when someone claims to have had a “revelation?” Should we give credence to everyone who comes along and claims to have had a vision? We should not. *I have heard what the prophets have said who prophesy lies in my name, saying, 'I have dreamed, I have dreamed!'* (Jeremiah 23:25, RSV).

Sola Scriptura (Scripture alone) is the conviction

that Scripture (the Bible) alone is the sole source of doctrine and revelation.

This view is very strong in the churches of Christ. It stems from the fact that denominational governing bodies usually assume authority that couldn't possibly be approved by God. As their decisions became more and more overreaching, believers pulled away from the denominations and determined to get their authority from scripture alone. The term came into being by the original protestants; but it has become very important in Restoration heritage.

Sola Scriptura is not in the Bible (*gasp!*), but the New Testament does give the highest authority to Scripture. It is sufficient to equip a believer for “every good work.”

All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Even in this case, at the writing of 2 Timothy, the New Testament Scriptures were still being written. Paul's Bible was the Old Testament.

New Testament revelation was, at the time, confirmed by the Holy Spirit. *...how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard him, while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his own will* (Hebrews 2:3-4).

1 Thessalonians 2:13 shows a growing acceptance of apostolic teaching and writing as having authority equal to the Old Testament. With Hebrews 2:3-4 above, we know that those teachings were accompanied by signs from the Spirit that they were authentic words of God. *And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not*

as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers (1 Thessalonians 2:13. See also 2 Peter 3:16-17).

This question is much larger than I am presenting here; but there are certainties. Scripture is the measuring stick against which we judge teaching, whether from visions and dreams or some other method by which a teacher believes he received word from the Holy Spirit (Acts 17:11). It is the duty of the church to judge all teaching (1 Corinthians 14:29, Galatians 1:8-9).

If somebody believes he has received a message from God or the Holy Spirit, there is no reasoning with him; but we can know whether the message should be discarded.

Be suspicious of any teaching that forcefully promotes a doctrine not expressly taught in the Scriptures.

Gifts (Charismata)

Andrew Wilson

A few months ago, a well-known Christian speaker tweeted (and I paraphrase), "I'm not especially gifted. I've just worked very hard. If you keep pursuing your dreams, God will accomplish dramatic things through you!" She was well-intentioned, no doubt, and sincerely aiming to encourage others. But her gifts of intelligence, communication, and creativity are far greater than average. She has no way of knowing whether her work rate is unusually high or whether her readers will accomplish "dramatic" things. If the apostle Paul were on Twitter, I imagine he'd respond, "What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not?" (1 Corinthians 4:7).

It's not that we fail to celebrate work. Rather, we so emphasize our work that God's gifts to us are often minimized. By doing so, we convince ourselves that our success is the result of work rather than grace. Meritocracy has replaced *charismata* [gifts].

When we elevate our work above God's gifts, it shifts glory from him to us. "Gift" language points to an abundantly generous gift giver. "Work"

language credits the worker and points toward the self. It also generates a sense of entitlement: If I have something because of my efforts, then I deserve it. "to the one who works," Paul says, "wages are not credited as a *gift* but as an *obligation*" (Romans 4:4, my italics). But if God gave it to me, then I will hold it loosely, knowing I have no rights to it, that it could have been given to someone else just as easily. If you're work-minded, you own things; if you're gift-minded, you steward them and give them away as soon as you're asked. Easy come, easy go.

Grace-centered theology sees the church as a body, where different gifts are given to different people and so foster interdependence. Meritocratic, or work-centered, theology tells us that if we study more, pray harder, or evangelize more regularly, we too can be as effective as so-and-so. If everything is within our own reach, then why need one another? Why be the church?

Christianity Today. September 2014.

News

Esther and Sara Atchley are in Lubbock.

Gloria Short will be traveling for the next two weeks.

Tatyana Knowlton is visiting family in Russia and Ukraine.

Barbara Eisenberg is in home hospice care.

Please remember in prayer Barbara, her husband Bill and their loved ones Robin, Tamara and Carri.

John and Sharon Cunningham are traveling.

Prayer List:

Bill and Barbara Eisenberg, H.L. Boling, Mike and Sandy Cavasos, Nic and Ani Self.

