

Safford Church of Christ

3888 S Hwy 191, Safford, AZ 85546

15 February 2015

Topics

A.M. Bible Class:

The blood of Christ (Hebrews 9:11f)

A.M. Lesson:

Eternal Life (Hebrews 5:7-10)

P.M. Lesson:

God promised to be with us (Joshua 1:5f)

Wednesday:

Life in the Spirit (Romans 8:1-17)

Pulpit Evangelist

Ken Knowlton: 428-3494

Elders

Greg Briggs: 428-8756

John Cunningham: 428-0895

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| 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. |

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

The Bible is not always practical

Wes McAdams, radicallychristian.com

Many people today treat the Bible as a practical guide to life. They see Scripture as a divine self-help book. "If I follow the teachings in this book," they say to themselves, "I will have the job I want, the relationships I want, money in the bank, and great health." But I'm afraid, if you read the Bible in that way, you're missing the point entirely.

Certainly, many of the teachings in Scripture are practical. Take for instance, drunkenness, adultery, and fornication. There are many practical reasons why a person should abstain from these things. A person will likely live a longer and happier life if he abstains from these things. And if he treats others with kindness, dignity, and respect he will usually live happier still.

But if you think the teachings of Jesus are tantamount to pragmatism, then you and I are not reading the same Jesus.

People often want to know if the teachings of Jesus "work." Many social reformers have used Jesus' teachings about meekness and non-violence as a practical strategy for social reform. Others have looked to Jesus' teachings to learn how to be more effective leaders in their organizations. And countless individuals have desperately sought advice for improving their relationships in the the teachings of Jesus.

When Jesus' teachings prove to be effective for achieving their desired goals, these folks loudly

proclaim, "The teachings of Jesus work!" On any given Sunday, you can hear a preacher telling anecdote after anecdote to illustrate how Jesus' teachings work. "Just last week," a preacher might say, "a young boy showed kindness to a bully at school and now that bully is his best friend. Therefore, love your enemies because it works!"

But Jesus didn't tell us to be meek, to turn the other cheek, to love our enemies, and to humbly serve others because these are practical strategies for achieving our desired goals. He told us to do this because in so doing, God is glorified by our faithful obedience.

Sometimes loving an enemy results in converting an enemy to a friend. But other times, loving an enemy results in being laughed at, being ignored, or even being thrown to the lions or nailed to a cross. Either way, the disciple of Jesus will bring glory to God because he has obeyed his Master. Jesus calls this type of living, the "blessed" life (Matthew 5:3-12).

Jesus didn't tell His disciples, "Follow me and all your dreams will come true." Jesus wasn't a politician, a motivational speaker, or a self-help guru. In fact, Jesus taught people that following Him would likely result in their deaths (Luke 14:26-33).

He told people, "If you follow me, you need to realize there is a good chance you'll lose everything and probably be killed. So before you begin this journey with me, you need to be prepared to lose it all."

And obviously, He was right. For 2,000 years, people have been slaughtered for being disciples of Jesus. Historically speaking, Christianity has proven to be more of a practical way to die rather than a practical way to

live a longer and happier life.

Jesus isn't a philosopher whose philosophy we prefer to other teachers. We don't follow Jesus because we believe His teachings are a practical guide to chasing the American Dream. We follow Jesus for this simple reason: because He is the Son of God!

The one who follows Jesus only when – and only because – it is practical and convenient, is no disciple of Christ. The real test of discipleship is following Christ when it's impractical, when it gets you thrown into prison, when it causes people to dislike you, when it causes people to speak poorly of you, when it costs you money, or even when it costs you your life.

When others abandoned Him because of His teachings, Jesus turned to the Twelve and asked, "Do you want to go away as well?" But they answered, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God" (John 6:68-69).

Simple enough, isn't it? We follow Him because He is "the Holy One of God" and He has "the words of eternal life." Often His teachings are practical, but we don't obey because they are practical. We obey because we believe!

Our need for the lordship of Christ

Grant R. Osborne
comments on Romans 7

Believers long to be released from the hostile power of sin at work in their total beings. Paul's question reverberates with all too many Christians who are living lives of tragic self-centeredness and spiritual defeat. J. I. Packer says it well: "The 'wretched man' outburst is the mark of a healthy believer who loves God's law and aims to keep it perfectly, but finds that something within him whose presence is known only by its effects, namely indwelling sin, obstructs and thwarts his purpose; for it betrays him time and again into doing things which at the moment of action seem good but in hindsight appear bad."

But it does not have to be this way, for the answer comes quickly in the form of a thanksgiving, *Thanks be to God--[rescue comes] through Jesus Christ our Lord!* The brevity with which Paul states this triumphant cry is keeping with his style for important points. The only solution to the distress of spiritual defeat is to acknowledge and depend completely upon the lordship of Christ. Until Christ is made Lord of our lives, defeat will always be a reality. But in Christ there is both strength to resist

and the power to be victorious. All the studies (Gallup, Barna and others) of the church at the dawn of the twenty-first century have reported the growing secularity that dominates. On the whole, you cannot tell a Christian from a non-Christian in terms of lifestyle, morals or priorities. This means that more Christians than ever are only partially committed to Christ. One of the important tasks of the church today is not just reaching the unchurched but waking up the dormant Christians who come but do nothing for the Lord. This passage describes those people. We must help them change their priorities and make *Jesus Christ their Lord*. This brief note of victory is in a sense a preview of coming attractions, for it points forward to chapter 8, where the means for accomplishing this is more fully explained.

Romans. IVP Academic. 190.

News:

Faye Atchley's funeral will be on March 7 at the Kearny church building. More details will be posted here as they become available.

Jimmy Johnson's daughter Shelley has taken him into her home. Keep Jimmy in your prayers. He will miss being with all his friends. Keep Shelley in your prayers for she will be needing strength and patience. Correspondence to Jimmy can be sent to:

Jimmy C. Johnson
c/o Shelley Van Sharr
3505 E. Murritta Road
Gilbert AZ 85297

Jeannie Robinson needs prayers. She is struggling with stress related problems.

Greg Briggs' eye surgery went very well. The Briggs' thank everyone for prayers and appreciate continued prayers for healing.

Prayer List:

Jimmy Johnson, Greg Briggs, Joy Gibson, Tatyana Knowlton, Ken Cocke, Janet Radar, H.L. Boling, Mike and Sandy Cavasos, Nic and Ani Self.

Neil Short, editor.
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