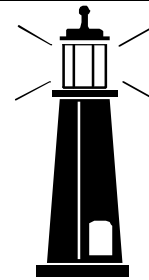


The Berryville church of Christ

Bible Beacon

"Thy word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." (Psalm 119:105)



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Zealous Mediocrity (?)

Kevin Cauley

I suppose if there were ever an oxymoron to be considered, the title of this article would be within the top ten. It would be there along with apathetic concern, charitable covetousness, and slothful industriousness. We generally use oxymorons when, in our language, we fail to find the appropriate description for something in terms of non-conflicting vocabulary. Oxymorons also generally serve to provide a measure of both entertainment, and rebuke. In short, an oxymoron takes one extreme to describe its opposite. Hence, the title of the article.

The word zealous is really just the positive aspects of the word jealous. When a person is jealous, they are generally consumed with desire for something that someone else has, whether it be a material possession, wealth, a relationship, or personal attention. Generally we think of jealousy as a bad thing. However, one can be jealous for something that is good too, but we use the word zealous to describe the good aspects of jealousy. Being zealous is just the opposite side of the coin of being jealous. The same attributes apply, but the object of the jealousy is noble instead of contemptible.

When we think of someone that is zealous for a cause, we think of someone who is a real go getter. We think of someone who applies every ounce of energy they have to their work. We think of someone who is burning up with motivation to go out and get the job done. We look at sports teams at all levels, high school, college, and professional, particularly football, and we see examples of zeal. Before the game they are out on the field getting pumped up. They meet in a huddle and cheer themselves on to victory. They growl and grunt and grate their teeth giving their every ounce of energy to the effort. It is a true picture of zeal.

On the other hand, we have mediocrity. You

can almost hear the balloon of zeal deflate merely at the sound of the word. The word mediocrity has within it the word medium. It is neither hot or cold, neither black or white, neither at one extreme or the other, but squarely ensconced in the middle. In a sense, there are no opposites to mediocrity because the true opposites of mediocrity are both miles away from where mediocrity sits.

Mediocrity is not something that is generally desired. When was the last time you heard someone say, "Boy I really enjoyed dinner tonight, it was so . . . mediocre." I expect that you would have one angry host or hostess on your hands should you say something like that. Or when was the last time you went out with your significant other and said, "I really had a mediocre time tonight. Let's do it again." Doesn't quite make sense, does it?

So what do we get when we have "zealous mediocrity" or "mediocre zeal"? We get a white-washed version of something that nobody really wants. That is, everyone "believes" in zeal and disdains mediocrity. But, of course, more often than not, our actions in this area speak louder than our words. So if you look at what we say, there is zeal, however, if you look at what we do, there is mediocrity, hence, we have zealous mediocrity. We go out onto the field and we give a good pep rally, but when it comes to playing the game, we haply turn the ball over every chance we get—zealous mediocrity.

The church at Laodicea had a similar problem. Jesus said to them, "So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. . . . As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent" (Revelation 3:16-19). The church at Laodicea was zealous for mediocrity. They had works, but they were mediocre. They thought they were rich, but they were really poor. They thought they were clothed rather well, but they were naked. They thought they could see, but they were blind. Mediocrity takes the things around us and transforms them into apparently beautiful things. And we become zealous for that

deceptive beauty. A lot of times, we see what we want to see and hence become self deceived to the true situation. This is exactly what had happened to the church in Laodicea. They were zealous for mediocrity, desirous of a situation where they were satisfied with their "work." Instead of being zealous with mediocrity, they needed to be zealous with repentance.

The great rivers of our country provide us a picture of zealous mediocrity. The waters of the Missouri, Ohio, and Mississippi constantly churn and twirl as they make their way toward the Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic Ocean. When we look at the waters of those rivers, in places they appear very zealous, but ultimately they follow the course of least resistance. They are zealous for mediocrity. The true source of zeal lies not in the waters that occasionally churn on the surface of the river, but in the rocks that hold steadfast to its bottom. It is not that which follows the course of least resistance that creates zeal, but that which resists the course of least resistance. What path are we on, Christian friend? The path of zealous mediocrity? Or the path of zeal that leads to salvation?

Kevin's Korner



Our year has suddenly, albeit, expectedly, come to a complete and grinding halt. It is time to bid farewell to the year 2003. But other than a farewell glance, we will shed no tears for the year 2003. We will not get caught up in the self pity of "what could have been if only." We will not give ourselves to the endless analysis of past failures. Neither will we take sinful pride in boasting of our accomplishments. The year 2003 is all but dead and gone and there is nothing that we can do in the present to revive the past, either good or bad. So let us press forward with the work that we have to do, with the charge that our Master has laid before us. The past is in the hands of the Almighty God, but the present and future is within our grasp. What will our attitude be toward those precious moments of time trustingly committed by God to our careful hands? Let us resolve to make the most of every moment in 2004. Let us resolve to redeem the time that we have on earth with treasures in heaven. The year 2003 is gone. The year 2004 is before us! We press forward as soldiers of the Almighty King.

Our Record	
Week of 12/14/03	
Sunday Class	57
Sunday A.M.	63
Sunday P.M.	57
Wednesday	58
Contribution	NA
Budget.....	\$1760.00

Sunday's Sermons

For 12/21/03

Morning **Faithfulness**
 Scripture..... Hebrews 10:19-25
Evening **God's Gifts**
 Scripture..... Ephesians 1:3

"As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Be zealous therefore and repent!"
Revelation 3:19

Elders: Clay Bozarth, Leon Duncan, Bruce Foster, Bill Fort, Glenn Quigley
Deacons: Ken Smith, Brent Stevens, Rusty Windle.
Preacher: Kevin Cauley 870-423-6707

Times of Worship and Study

Sunday Morning Bible Class:..... 9:30 AM
 Sunday Morning Worship: 10:30 AM
 Sunday Evening Worship: 6:00 PM
 Ladies Bible Class:..... 10:30 AM
 Wed. Evening Bible Class:..... 7:00 PM

Two Buses

Kevin Cauley

T'was early in the morning hours,
I rose with lightning speed.
Today's a very special day,
To which I've given heed.
Not long ago at church, you see,
A plan was hatched and formed,
To take us youth to some neat place,
It promised to be fun.
With socks and shoes and laces tied,
I headed out the door.
Early I wanted to arrive,
Upon the bus to board.

Two buses had been got that day,
To take us youth abroad.
For months we had been told of this,
And thought there must be lots,
Of other kids to come our way,
To need a second bus.
No doubt the extra transport was,
To hold the lot of us.

So to the building I did come,
The expectant moment dawning.
And look around to see the crowd,
Of youth to the outing coming.
It did not seem to me, at least,
An extra bus was needed.
But those who planned the outing
Surely knew what they were doing.

The time arrived to tell us kids
What destination waited.
Where would we go today, I thought,
With anticipation sated.
Perhaps we'll go to see a cave,
Its depths to ponder deeply,
Perhaps we'll climb a mountain tall,
The world to see so sweetly,
Perhaps a movie we will see,
A fantastic adventure awaiting.
Or maybe to an amusement park,
We'll spend the day enjoying.

No sooner had I thought these things,
Than quickly a leader rose.
He cleared his throat to tell us all
Just where this day we'd go.
"We have two buses," he said quite clear.
"Each will go its place.
I want you all to listen here,
So you can make your choice."

A choice? A choice? Two places to go?
Since when have we done such?
We always go in one big group,
I want to know what's up!

"Yes," he said, "its changed today,
We have two ways to choose.
Bus one will go one way
And the other will go bus two.
If you choose bus one just wait and see,
a wonderful time awaits.
You'll have fun all day, you'll eat, you'll play,
There's just one little catch.
At the end of the day, you'll have to pay,
For making yourself a wretch."

"What of the second bus, you ask,
What waits for those who board?
The hospital, first, then nursing homes,
Then on to other chores.
We'll rake yards for those who can't work
We'll clean houses, yes, and then,
We'll wash dishes, clothes, and feed the poor,
Until the day then ends."

"I want to play" I heard someone say,
"I'm hungry" another cried.
And greedily rushed upon the first bus,
But something I did spy.
The driver of that bus, I saw,
Did have a grimacing sneer.
I'm not so sure, but I thought he had,
Two horns coming out of his hair.
"That's mighty strange," I thought to myself.
So I looked in at bus number two.
The Driver of that bus to me,
Looked very familiar too.
White garments He was wearing and,
A crown of thorns He wore.
His hands and feet were pierced too,
Yet ready He was to go.

A choice I had to make that day,
To ride bus one or bus two,
For eternity is where I would be,
In the bus that I would choose.

I woke with sweat upon my brow,
The choice still at my feet.
No buses were outside the door,
Just a life to live before me.
I realized that each day I choose,
To ride bus one or bus two,
So I must make the choice today,
For eternity is mine to gain, or to lose.

News, Notes and Prayer List



- Please remember the following in your prayers: Marie Adams, Geneva Atchley, Donna Brown, Hughetta Hand, Curtis and Opal Hull, Randy Kramoski, Chris

Pinkley, Grace Windle.

- Edith Mischler is in the nursing home in Eureka Springs.
- Art Roberts and Mary Patterson are confined to their homes.
- There will be a New Year's Eve party Wednesday, December 31st after services at the church building. We will sing and pray in the new year. Please bring party type snacks.
- On the bulletin board in the foyer is posted a yearly schedule for monthly assignments. This is for the year 2004. **Please look at this schedule.** If there are any questions or changes that need to be made, let me know and I will adjust it appropriately.
- There is an update from A.J. Hendrix posted on the bulletin board.
- There is a thank you note from the children's home posted on the bulletin board.
- The monthly elders and deacons meeting is scheduled for Sunday evening. If you have anything you wish to bring up at this meeting please contact one of these men.
- Our monthly potluck is scheduled for this coming Sunday. Please make your plans to attend.
- The Cauley family will be on Christmas vacation this next week (22nd—30th). Brother Ralph Hunter will be filling the pulpit during this time.
- Due to the Christmas holidays there will be no bulletin published next week.
- The Pantry Item for this week is Pancake Mix.



Those to Serve

	<u>Today</u>	<u>Next Week</u>
Sunday Morning:	December 21st, 2003	December 28th, 2003
Song Leader:	Brent Stevens	Bill Fort
Preacher:	Kevin Cauley	Ralph Hunter
Opening Prayer:	Glenn Williams	Ken Smith
Scripture:	Ray Duncan	Larry Elliott
Lord's Table:	Dan Hand	Glenn Quigley
	Larry Elliott	Leon Duncan
(assist)	Matt Bassing	Jack Gentry
	Brandon Foster	Sandy Nieves
Closing Prayer	Clay Bozarth	George Eddings
Sunday Night:		
Songs:	Hugh Atchley	Bruce Foster
Preacher:	Kevin Cauley	Ralph Hunter
Opening Prayer:	Leon Duncan	Dan Hand
Scripture:	Perry Foster	Dale Pinkley
Lord's Table:	Clay Bozarth	Ken Smith
	Brent Stevens	Ray Duncan
Closing Prayer	Dale Pinkley	Rusty Windle
Wednesday		
Songs:	Glenn Quigley	Sandy Nieves
Opening Prayer:	Glenn Williams	Rusty Windle
Invitation:	Bill Fort	Bruce Foster
Closing Prayer:	George Eddings	Ray Duncan
Monthly Assignments		
Announcements	Brent Stevens	
Worship Coordinator	Leon Duncan	
Communion Prep	Susan Elliott	Joann Bragg
Communion Carry	Dale Pinkley	Clay Bozarth

The "Berryville Bible Beacon" is published by the Berryville church of Christ. Please contact Kevin Cauley at work at (870) 423-3068 or at home at (870) 423-6707 or e-mail bvcc@alltel.net to contribute information.

For questions or comments, please call (870) 423-3068 or write us at:
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