

Merely a Matter of Perception

Got to see sin up close and personal this week. I saw its intention. I saw its form. I saw its effects. It was ugly. You may wonder what particular sin that it is I saw. And while that would be a discussion that has merit and would be productive on another occasion, it isn't the point that I wish to make now. Because the fact of the matter is that sin is sin. One sin is just as ugly to God as another (Isaiah 59:2). It is a sobering fact that any sin we habitually commit severs us from our relationship with God (John 8:34). It really does not matter what that sin is, per se. Oh, we may deceive ourselves from time to time with the idea that "my sin" is not as bad as "your sin." But such is simply deception. It is a lie; a falsehood that Satan tells us to try to get us to believe that sin is not really all that serious. Sin is deadly serious.

Take someone who is addicted to drugs as an example. Here is a sin that is generally recognized in society. We see the drug addict and we think, "How sad for him that he is so possessed by such a thing." We know that he is possessed by his drugs, because we see his desire for them. We see the craving. We see the "joy" he gets from using them. We see the consumption that results from such use. We see the gutter-filled-trashed-out effects of their use. And we see the addict return time after time to the same estate. We wonder, "How could anyone live like that?" They live like that because the ultimate goal of Satan is to so deceive someone as to make them think that there is nothing wrong with their sinful situation. Our pity for such a one should not be due to the condition, but the deception.

And we ask, "How could one be so deceived so as to be involved in such a pathetic suit?" The truth however, is that we frequently live the same way. Satan has deceived many of us as well. Many live in a state of societally approved addictions that while outwardly appear perfectly benign, inwardly they destroy us just as cancerously as the sin of the drug

addict. These addictions display much more subtle and deceptive effects. These effects sometimes even robe themselves in a façade of righteousness so as to have the appearance of something decent. We see such effects in the faces of those who turn their nose in disgust at the addictions of others without even acknowledging that their own addiction is equally as deadly. Do we see in these the same symptoms? The craving? The possession? The "joy?" The consummation? Indeed, who is the more deceived?

Today is the day that the religious world calls "Easter." It is the end of the Jewish Passover. It is the anniversary of the resurrection of Jesus. I'm not saying that there is anything especially holy about this Sunday out of all of the other Sundays in the year. They are all equally holy as far as God is concerned. Christians remember the resurrection of Jesus every Sunday. Historically, however, this is that time of the year and many do take time to reflect upon that event. So why bring up such a "depressing" subject at such a time? Because it was for precisely this reason that Jesus gave himself on the cross. So that we could be free from the possession of sin. He was resurrected so that we could walk in newness of life (Romans 6:4). Indeed, to habitually **fail** to examine our own lives, to habitually **fail** to reflect upon what God has done for us when we were possessed in sin, is an addiction of an equally worse and deceptive kind. It is equally being in the possession of sin. What greater triumph could Satan have than to cause us to cease to examine our own personal sin on a daily basis and the relationship of forgiveness that we have with God as a result of the vicarious sacrifice of Christ? What greater triumph than to deceive us into thinking that our sinful situation is any better than that of others?

I learned a little more about the love of God and Jesus this week, because I saw in my experience something that God must see in all humanity—a great and tremendous need for salvation from

(Continued on page 2)

The Bible is The Word of God

If we miss the point that the Bible IS the word of God, and the ONLY word of God, then many bad things happen. Perhaps the WORST thing which can happen is missing out on the eternal wisdom of God. In our world today there are many mistakes being made on a philosophical level because men have rejected the wisdom of God, recorded in the and only in the Bible. If you consider all the things which NOW are considered "politically correct," and which just a few short years ago were recognized as real evil, you can see that the wisdom of God has been rejected. Isaiah 5:20 still says, "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter." What has happened? Evil people in high political places are persecuting good men; and the evil men claim that they are prosecuting evil men. How? Why?

When Good men point out the sins of evil men, then evil men call this "hate talk." The most SAD people on earth now call themselves "gay." Incredible! They have changed the meaning of that word. They have "put sweet for bitter and bitter for sweet." And above all this, they have rejected the eternal wisdom of God by putting "culture" before THE TRUTH!!! Why, oh why is this so difficult to understand? When these sinners are told

the truth IN LOVE they say such is "hate talk." When we tell the truth we are called "hate mongers" and "hate peddlers." Correctly and well did the wise man picture these people in Proverbs 30:20. "So is the way of an adulterous woman; She eateth, and wipeth her mouth, and saith, I have done no wickedness."

Will you, CAN you, put God's wisdom before family, friends, culture, nation? Matthew 10:34-39 still says that anything and everything a person puts before God will cause that person to endure eternity in a devil's hell. 1 Corinthians 2:6-16 still says that God's wisdom has been revealed, that His wisdom can and MUST be correctly understood, and that it alone can save. What is good? What is evil? God alone knows the answer. He has told us. What will you and I do with God's wisdom (John 12:48; Hebrews 5:8-9)?

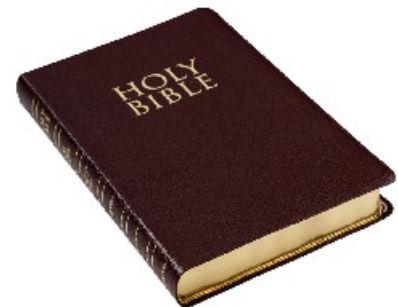
Foy G. Forehand

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(Continued from page 1)

sin. Not just of those with **visible** addictions, but those of us with the **invisible** one's as well. God once told Samuel, "... for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart" (1 Samuel 16:7). We may look outwardly and see all kinds of wrongs and evils in this world, and even do so justifiably. However, if we look outward while failing to look inward, our sin is merely a matter of perception, and that of an equally deceptive sort. May God bless us with HIS eyes so as to look upon the things that we ought to look upon, both outward and inward, in our daily walk with Him.

Kevin Cauley



Sermons and Study Topics

Week of 04/11/04

Morning	What Will You Do With Jesus?
Scripture	Matthew 27:22-24
Evening	Questions and Answers
Scripture	NA
Sunday Morning Bible Study	The Book of Hebrews
Wednesday Evening Bible Study	How To Study the Bible

Weekly Record

Week of 04/04/04

Sunday Class	53
Sunday A.M.	69
Sunday P.M.	53
Wednesday	54
Contribution	\$1866.98
Budget	\$1778.13

Every Man In His Place

S In Judges 6-8, we learn about Gideon. God chooses Gideon to deliver his people from the Midianites. Gideon calls the Israelites to war against the Midianites. Thirty two thousand men respond to his call. Twenty two thousand go home because they are afraid to fight. God tells Gideon that there are still too many men. God does not want the Israelites to believe that they defeated the Midianites. He wants them to know that they defeat the Midianites only because God is on their side.

Gideon is told to have the men go to the water and drink. Those who drink from the water by lapping water from their hand will be the ones who fight. Only 300 men drink water this way. Gideon takes these 300 men and divide them into 3 companies. The

three companies then surround the Midianite camp in the middle of the night. Each man has a trumpet, an empty pitcher and a torch light. At the appointed time each blows his trumpet and breaks the pitcher. And each shouts "The sword of the Lord, and of Gideon."

The Midianites are surprised and end up fighting among themselves. Many kill each other. The rest run for their lives. It is a huge victory for the Israelites. They won the battle without having to use swords.

It is interesting that in chapter 7, verse 21, we read, "And they stood every man in his place round about the camp..." Each of the 300 men had their appointed place to stand. Each had his job to do. Their success depended on each staying in his place.

Those in the church have a place. Each person is needed if the church

is to be successful in the community. God expects us to all work together to evangelize our community. God is the one who wins the battle but each of us must do our part.

Keep reading your Bible. Learn what God wants you to know. Do your part in teaching others the Gospel. And if any of this is hard to understand, ask an adult to help you.

Mark McWhorter
From "Wisdom's Corner"
MTMVCVB@concentric.net

Kevin's Korner

Computers was one order of business this past week. Many of you know of my volunteer efforts at the community center and I have been doing some work on their computers recently. The owners of the Shamrock Inn also have had me working on their computers to a degree. I do enjoy working with computers as a hobby (now that it is a hobby). So, by way of introduction, I will be holding a couple of computer classes at the community center the last two Tuesdays in April (20th and 27th). The class is called "Opening Windows" and will focus upon the Windows operating system. If you would like to attend, or you know of someone who would like to attend, please call the Berryville Community Center to register for the class today at 870-423-3139.

Our friends and family day and vacation Bible school are just right around the corner. We are now only two months away from those events. Are we inviting others? The theme for our VBS this year is God's Treasures. As already mentioned, this will be an all day VBS on Saturday, June 12th. Sunday June 13th, we will have our friends and family day. That day we will also have smoked BBQ brisket. Then, after our lunch, we will have a time of congregational singing. Please mention these things when inviting others. Last year we had a morning assembly attendance of 119. Let's see if we can meet and exceed this goal this year! Can we invite enough to have 120? 130? 150? The answer lies with you!

I received a call yesterday from a Mr. Ken Overman who is the son of Engie Clark. Ken is looking for someone who can be a live-in caretaker for Engie. The salary includes room and

board. If you are interested in doing this, or you know someone who would like to do it, please give Ken a call at 438-6320.

Elders:

Clay Bozarth, Leon Duncan,
Bruce Foster, Bill Fort, Glenn
Quigley

Deacons:

Ken Smith, Brent Stevens,
Rusty Windle.

Preacher:

Kevin Cauley... 870-423-6707

News, Notes, and 'Nouncements

- We are truly thankful to God for the wonderful new Lord's day that he has given us today to worship him in Spirit and in Truth!
- We extend our deepest sympathies to the family of Bob Moore in the loss of his mother. Memorial services were this past Wednesday in Blythesville, AR.
- Let us remain constant in prayer for the following individuals: Hugh Atchley, Wanda Bozarth, Michael Collins, Debbie Duncan, Brian Guess, Donna Henderson, Hulen Penn, Chris Pinkley..
- Please remember our shut ins: Curtis and Opal Hull, Edith Mischler, Mary Patterson, and Art Roberts.
- This morning right after our morning service, we request that everyone immediately meet out front for a congregational picture. This picture is going to be used to send to our missionaries. Thanks, in advance, for your cooperation in this regard.
- This afternoon we will have an egg hunt at Loretta Williams house. Everyone is invited to come out and find eggs, even Rusty!
- Next Sunday will be our monthly potluck. We missed last month's due to the work on the basement, so let's all stay for this month and have a great time in fellowship with one another.
- Next Sunday evening is also the new scheduled time for our youth devotional. Details on where that will be held will be forthcoming.
- April 20th—22nd there will be a gospel retreat at the Shell Knob church of Christ. A flyer is posted in the back if you desire further information.
- The pantry item for this week is Tomato Sauce.



Welcome!

To the Berryville church of Christ.

Family Times for 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

Serving Each Other

	April 11th, 2004	April 18th, 2004
Sunday Morning		
Songs:	Larry Elliott	Bill Fort
Preaching:	Kevin Cauley	Kevin Cauley
Opening Prayer:	Bob Moore	Clay Bozarth
Scripture Reading:	Perry Foster	Brent Moore
Lord's Table	Clay Bozarth	Leon Duncan
	Glenn Quigley	Ken Smith
(assist)	Bruce Foster	Larry Elliott
	Matt Bassing	Jack Gentry
Closing Prayer	Jerry Roller	George Eddings
Sunday Evening		
Songs:	Bruce Foster	Glenn Williams
Preaching:	Kevin Cauley	Kevin Cauley
Opening Prayer:	Dale Pinkley	Dan Hand
Scripture Reading:	Brent Moore	Ray Duncan
Lord's Table	George Eddings	Raymond Kimes
	Rusty Windle	Matt Bassing
Closing Prayer	Glenn Quigley	Hugh Atchley
Wednesday		
Songs:	Kevin Cauley	Glenn Quigley
Opening Prayer:	Ken Smith	George Eddings
Invitation:	Larry Elliott	Bill Fort
Closing Prayer:	Brent Stevens	Cody Moore

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