



‘Those Folks Are Different’

This past week I was having a conversation with a friend who is a member of a denominational church. She mentioned to me that she wanted to come visit us and that she had told her “pastor” that she was going to visit us. Her “pastor” asked who we were and my friend responded, “the church of Christ.” The “pastor” said, “Are you sure you want to do that? Those folks are different!”

There are many members of the church today who would react negatively to that analysis. They would say, “Oh, we’re no different than any of the denominations around us.” To these, it is an embarrassment that they are considered to be different by the denominations. These would want to change the church into just another denomination, to legitimize and acquire instrumental music, to destroy the autonomy of the local congregation, to call the preacher, “pastor”, to get rid of the name “church of Christ,” etc. until the church is no longer distinctive from those around us. However, that would not be the way of God or Christ.

We read in the scriptures that God has always demanding of his people that they be different. In Deuteronomy 14:2, Moses tells the children of Israel that they are different. He says, “*For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God, and the LORD hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth.*” The word “holy” means to be set apart, different. God wanted the children of Israel to be a “peculiar people.” The new English Standard Version translates this phrase “treasured possession.” Certainly something that is a treasured possession is different from everything else one has and is set apart.

In the New Testament as well, Peter quotes from this passage in Deuteronomy and applies it toward “Spiritual Israel”—Christians. Peter writes, “*But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light*” (1 Peter 2:9).

God wants us, as Christians, to be different. Paul writes to Titus these words regarding Jesus, “*Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works*” Titus 2:14). Jesus died so that we could be different. We read in 2 Corinthians 6:17, 18: “*Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.*” In order to be God’s children, the church must be separate, distinct, unique, different.

So, are we different? Yes, we are, and I am glad that we are. Today we live in a time when denominations around us are conforming to the world. We hear of denominations who condone abortion, homosexuality, fornication, and adultery. The church of Christ does not condone such activities because God’s word condemns these things. Instead of conforming to the way that the world would have the church, the church ought to be demanding of individuals that their lives be transformed through repentance and renewal of mind. In Romans 12:2 we read, “*And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*”

Are we different? Yes, we are. We are different because we have been transformed by Christ to be a people who are holy, the children of God, separate from that which is sinful; different from the way the world would mold religion in its own image today. It is our differences from everyone else that define who we are as Christians. We should never be embarrassed of that! The world and the denominations may think us “strange” (1 Peter 4:4) but I wouldn’t have it any other way. One day, Jesus will return and all will bow and God will be glorified, not because of our similarities with the world, but because of our differences (Matthew 25:34).

Kevin Cauley

I Am Blind

A blind man was sitting on the steps of a building with a hat by his feet and a sign that read: "I am blind, please help." A creative publicist was walking by him and stopped to observe that he only had a few coins in his hat. Without asking for his permission, took the sign, turned it around, and wrote another announcement. He placed the sign by his feet and left. That afternoon the creative publicist returned by the blind man and noticed that his hat was full of bills and coins. The blind man recognized his footsteps and asked if it was he who had re-written his sign. He wanted to know what he had written on it. The publicist responded, "Nothing that was not true. I just re-wrote your sign differently."

He smiled and went on his way. The blind man never knew, but his new sign read: "Today is Spring - and I cannot see it."*

It is quite possible for one to have a great need, and not be able to pinpoint it, much less describe it. In fact, It is possible for one to be completely blind to his/her greatest need (see Revelation 3:17). In the Word of God, our greatest need is revealed before our eyes: salvation from sin.

Sin SEPARATES us from God, our Creator (Isaiah 59:1-2). Sin BLINDS us to the real purpose for our existence. Sin DECEIVES us, taking us

down the path that leads to destruction (Matthew 7:13).

The Word of God also reveals the Solution to our greatest need: Jesus. Jesus is the Way to salvation and an eternal home in heaven (John 14:1-6). Those who place their trust in Him (Acts 16:31), repent of sin (Acts 17:30-31), confess Him before men (Romans 10:9-10), and are baptized (immersed) into Christ for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38), He heals them from their greatest malady: SIN. Those who continue to follow Him in obedience to His will, He will continue to cleanse from all sin (1 John 1:7).

In John 9, we find the account where Jesus healed a man that was born blind. In healing this man, Jesus gave him "DOUBLE VISION": his physical AND his spiritual eyesight. One may see in this account not only how this blind man received his sight, but also how he developed FAITH in Jesus as the Son of God. In the presence of the formerly-blind-man and some self-righteous Pharisees, Jesus said, "For judgment I have come into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may be made blind" (John 9:39).

Truly, there are NONE so blind as those who will not see! Do YOU "see" that Jesus is God's Son, the solution for our spiritual blindness? Won't YOU respond to Him in trusting obedience?

David A. Sargent

Why Do You Wait?

Oh, dear brother, why do you wait?
He died on the cross for your sake;
From Sin there's no other escape,
When you die it will be too late.

Oh, dear sister do not delay!
Jesus Christ is the only way!
While it is still called, Today, obey;
Jesus Christ has the final say.

Delay makes it harder to change,
Waiting only prolongs the pain.
Only Jesus can heal sin's scars,
Even remove its prison bars.

To earth from heaven He did come,
That perhaps He might just save some;
To redeem us at awful cost,
So we would not have to be lost.

His own flesh on the cross He gave,
His own blood He poured out to save.
The greatest sacrifice of all,
That the world to Him He might call.

He said, Come to Me and find rest,
Offering souls the very best;
Far too dangerous is delay,
There is no good reason to wait!

John H. O'Neal

Sermons and Study Topics

Week of 5/16/04

Morning	The Religion of Islam (Part 1)
Scripture	Matthew 7:15-20
Evening	The Religion of Islam (Part 2)
Scripture	1 John 4:1
Sunday Morning Bible Study	The Book of Hebrews
Wednesday Evening Bible Study	How To Study the Bible

Weekly Record

Week of 5/9/04

Sunday Class	63
Sunday A.M.	88
Sunday P.M.	66
Wednesday	63
Contribution	\$1692.46
Budget	\$1778.13

Thicker Than Blood

When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son!" Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home. - John 19:26-27, ESV

They say blood is thicker than water. Family is more important than strangers and old acquaintances they say - and, rightfully so. There are surely no more important relationships than family. Family is what God wants for us.

Thousands of souls walk this earth lonely, having no earthly ties. Christians see this as both a great concern and an opportunity. Listen to James, "Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit

orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world" (James 1:27). Family is what God wants for all of us. Just as Jesus made certain his mother was taken care of before he died on the cross, a pure faith requires us to do something for the afflicted and lonely.

Our Lord wants us to care. As surely as it is true God desires that each of us know the affection of familial love, He wants us to also value ties with our Christian brothers and sisters. Jesus died for family. Read Hebrews 2:11.

When we came to Christ, God adopted us into the spiritual family. He became our Abba, Father (Romans 8:15). Jesus began to call us his brothers and sisters (Mark 3:35). We have the family tie that cannot be broken.

When this life is over, men and women will not be married

(Mat.22:30). The earthly family unit will have fulfilled its purpose. There will be no blood-relatives in Paradise Valley. Oh, but there will be family.

Family is what God wants for all of us - spiritual family. While this present life will end, the Book of Life will have just really begun. Family as we see it here is but a shadow of what is to come. Yea, what in Christ has already begun. You see spirit is thicker than blood.

Earthly ties may be broken. Relationships may be interrupted and come to an end in the here and now. Not so in Paradise Valley. Spiritual family is forever.

Once we've been adopted into God's family, we have family on into eternity. Do you realize the Gospel makes you a direct descendent of the great patriarch Abraham? Oh, not a Jewish descendant. Rather "a member of the faith lineage. Galatians 3:7 reads, "Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham." That essentially makes the genealogy of Jesus Christ in Matthew 1, your genealogy.

Since all this is true, how ought we to treat our Christian brothers and sisters? Is earthly family more important than our church family? Whom shall we spend the most time with? Let's keep the bigger picture in mind.

Donny Weimar

Kevin's Korner

Kary Lynn and I went to Art Roberts birthday lunch this past Thursday and had a wonderful time. We got to visit with Art as well as with others who came to visit for the day. It was great to see brother Art sitting outside. Art's daughter was there and Art's caretaker, Janice, was there; they were both, along with Art, gracious hosts. The food that they had prepared was delicious. I enjoyed the BBQ beans and potato salad immensely. The cake and ice cream was really great. Art's daughter thought it funny that we men who were there ate Blackberry ripple ice cream with banana cake. We men didn't think that was funny at all; we thought it was yummy! Thanks to our members here, Art had a wonderful birthday celebration. Thank you all who dropped by to visit him.

This next item may look like a repeat, but I assure you that it is not. The Family First Foundation of Arkansas has sent to us a petition that will place on our November ballot a referendum regarding same-sex marriages. This is NOT the same petition that was distributed earlier this year. That petition was for the National Amendment on marriage. This one is being done at the state level. Rusty Windle has graciously volunteered to be the "canvasser" for this petition and so he will be getting with you and asking you to sign this petition. Rusty has to witness your signature. I want to encourage all of our members to sign this petition and then vote appropriately in the referendum this fall. We really need to stand up and defend marriage in our country. Those who lobby for immorality have made great progress in the last 30 years. It is time to turn back the tide on their evil works and reclaim our nation for righteousness!

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!
- Please remember in prayer the following individuals: Helen Bradley, Glenn Quigley, Brenda Schultz.
- Please also remember our shut-ins in your prayers: Curtis Hull, Edith Mischler, and Art Roberts.
- Many who were sick are on the mend. Let's keep the health of our congregation in our prayers!
- We wish to extend our congratulations to Brandon Foster for his achievement of graduating from High School. We wish Brandon the utmost success in his future endeavors!
- Our youth devo will be next week! Please make your plans to attend.
- The last Sunday of this month is our quarterly singing at the nursing home. You know, many people comment to me on what a wonderful job that we do when we come and sing. People are really noticing the effort that we make in this regard. So make your plans to be with us at 2:00 in the afternoon, the last Sunday of this month at the Berryville nursing home.
- We are now less than a month away from our Friends and Family day and VBS weekend! Are you inviting your friends, family, neighborhood children? We have a lot of work to do between now and then. Let's all pitch in to make this the most successful weekend that we have had here at the Berryville church of Christ!
- Our regular monthly potluck is today! If you are a visitor please stay with us and have lunch. We would love to be graced by your presence.
- The pantry item for this week is Cream of Chicken.



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

	May 16th, 2004	May 23rd, 2004
Sunday Morning		
Songs:	Bill Fort	Larry Elliott
Preaching:	Kevin Cauley	Kevin Cauley
Opening Prayer:	Rusty Windle	Brent Stevens
Scripture Reading:	Brent Stevens	Brent Moore
Lord's Table	John Gass	Leon Duncan
	Bruce Foster	Dan Hand
(assist)	Ray Duncan	Sandy Nieves
	George Eddings	Brandon Foster
Closing Prayer	Bob Moore	Matt Bassing
Sunday Evening		
Songs:	Bruce Foster	Rusty Windle
Preaching:	Kevin Cauley	Kevin Cauley
Opening Prayer:	Dan Hand	Larry Elliott
Scripture Reading:	Perry Foster	Ken Smith
Lord's Table	Dale Pinkley	Ray Duncan
	Matt Bassing	Sandy Nieves
Closing Prayer	John Gass	Bob Moore
Wednesday		
Songs:	Clay Bozarth	Sandy Nieves
Opening Prayer:	Bruce Foster	Rusty Windle
Invitation:	Dale Pinkley	Brent Stevens
Closing Prayer:	Larry Elliott	Dale Pinkley

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