

Plain Path

Weekly newsletter of the Fry Road church of Christ

Sunday, August 3, 2014

Volume 19, Number 31

“Teach me thy way, O Lord, and lead me in a plain path... Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart” (Psalm 27:11-14)

RELIGIOUS DOUBLE-TALK

by Bob Pulliam

How much obedience is necessary to please God? Everyone seems to talk about faith, but then double-talk on the subject of obedience. They know they cannot deny the need to obey God, but their theological preconceptions force them to deny one must obey *to be saved*. It is, at times, comical to listen to this double talk on religious broadcasts. They can with two adjacent sentences affirm the

need to obey God, and deny the necessity of obedience for salvation. People hear what they want to hear out of this talk.

I once heard a member of the church say, “I listened to Billy Graham on TV last night. And I was surprised to learn that he believes a person has to be baptized to be saved.” No, he did not, and does not believe that. Some people who believe that baptism is essential for salvation think tel-

evangelists teach the necessity of baptism for salvation. They do not! There is a generalization that allows people to walk away thinking what they thought before. These people are hearing what they want to hear out of these sermons. The question is not whether Billy Graham is sincere in what he preaches. I believe he stands head and shoulders above nearly every other televangelist. But that does not change the fact that he is wrong about baptism and salvation. I cannot ignore that. I don't care how popular his preaching is (or his children, now that he is 95), I must stand on God's word alone.

Does the Bible teach it both ways? Does the Bible teach that you don't have to “obey” to be saved, but you do have to “obey” to go to heaven? Well, let's begin with our faith. We all agree that one must believe to be saved, or go to heaven. But we must also consider the fact that one cannot acceptably believe without obey-

(Double-Talk, continued on pg 2...)

Gospel Meeting

September 7 - 10

The main thrust of this meeting will be reaching out to, and saving the lost.

Our Theme: Forgiveness Comes by Turning to God

Our speaker will be Joseph Casimier

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(Double-Talk, *continued from pg 1...*)

ing, for “faith without works is dead” (Jms 2:26). “Works” may refer to several different things in Scripture, but here refers to obedience. James tells us that obedience is the *necessary* result of faith. James said that Abraham’s faith was “perfected” (*i.e.* made complete) by works (Jms 2:22). There is something lacking in an attitude (like faith) when there is no action to back it up. Surely you realize that a man who tells his wife he loves her, and then ignores her all the time, is lacking the substance she requires in their relationship. Saying we believe requires two things to complete our relationship with God: 1) We must back it up with action (obedience); and 2) The actions undertaken must confirm our

commitment by being what God expects.

To illustrate, we have a world that affirms one may be saved by *faith only*, with *no obedience*; but also affirms that you must also obey to show your love to God. If you turn to God’s word to discover what proper obedience looks like, they call you a legalist. Am I to obey? They say, “Yes!”... And yet they don’t want any laws consulted. Now I ask you, what are you to *obey* if there is no *law*?

James was not the only author who turned to the Old Testament to get this point across. The author of Hebrews makes this same connection in Hebrews 3:18f. In verse eighteen the Israelites could not enter because they did not obey. In verse nineteen they could not enter because they did not believe. The two are inseparable in scripture. They only become separated when modern religion begins to double-talk.

You may be wondering about Paul’s statement that salvation is “not of works” in Ephesians 2:9. This is a very important text. He had just pointed out that we are saved “by grace... through faith” in the previous verse. And if we aren’t careful, we will interpret this passage in accordance with modern debate on the issue, rather than the debate (subject) that was in progress at the time he wrote Ephesians. The modern debate raises the question of whether one must be baptized to be saved. That isn’t even remotely under consideration in this text.

The question at hand (in the first century) was whether one must be circumcised to be saved.

Did a convert have to acknowledge the law of Moses, and be circumcised, to be saved? This subject is more forcefully addressed in epistles like Galatians and Romans, but is clearly on Paul’s mind here (study Eph 2:11 - 3:10). The subject is not whether one must obey (*e.g.* baptism). Paul knows you must (*e.g.* Phil 2:12). This is about false teachers who were trying to convince Gentiles that they must embrace the law of Moses to be saved (*cf.* Gal 6:12f). In so doing, they were

Our “actions undertaken must confirm our commitment by being what God expects.”

turning their backs on the power of the cross. Not because obedience is not necessary, but because they were turning back to a law that was based on perfect law-keeping. One cannot earn salvation, but going back to the Old Testament law obligated them to do that very thing (see also Rom 4:1-4).

What did Paul believe about baptism? By it, one gets *into* Christ (Rom 6:3f; Gal 3:26f). By it, Paul’s own sins were washed away (Acts 22:16 - note that it is Paul retelling this event). By it, we were “raised up with Him”, and thus God made us alive, “having forgiven us all our transgressions” (Col 2:12f).

Obviously, Paul did not have baptism under consideration when he spoke of *works* in Ephesians 2:9. Equally obvious is the fact that the Bible does not share in the double talk of modern religion.



THIS WEEK'S DAILY BIBLE READINGS

NEW TESTAMENT READING

ACTS 17 - 20

August 3 - 5

OLD TESTAMENT READING

JOSHUA 1 - 9

August 6 - 9

I TIMOTHY 4:13

FAMILY NEWS & NOTES

*News and Notes of Interest
to Fry Road Members*

Because of the large number of visitors to our services, we would ask those wishing to identify with the congregation to do so by expressing this interest directly to the elders.

Upcoming Meetings & Events:

Annual Singing
September 6, 2014

Gospel Meeting (Joseph Casimier)
September 7 - 10, 2014

Sick and Shut-Ins

Directory Info

Sections have been removed to preserve members' privacy

Sermons:

Next Sunday:

If I Have Not Love
(part IV)

Tonight:

The Conquest of the
Promised Land

Bereaved...

Ladies' Class

A special Ladies' Class will meet on the 17th and 24th of August before Sunday evening services (5:00 - 5:45 PM). The study will be on Two Remarkable Women of God (Rahab and Esther). If you can attend, please sign up on the sheet in the foyer. This will allow us to print up an adequate amount of class material.

FOR THE RECORD

WEEKLY ASSIGNMENTS

MONTHLY ASSIGNMENTS

Sections have been removed to preserve members' privacy

IN KEEPING WITH OUR LONG STANDING AGREEMENT, THOSE SERVING PUBLICLY ARE REMINDED TO PLEASE DRESS IN A MANNER RESPECTFUL OF THE GOD WHOM WE SERVE.

ELDERS:

Ruben Amador
Matthew Heaton
Donnie Mangrum
Steve Voss



DEACONS:

John Coleman	Ken Dunsmore
David Ellison	Ray Farrell
Aubrey Garner	Steve Geraci
Steve LaGrasta	John Light
Steven Martin	Mike McMurray
Jason Mock	David Stevenson
Glenn Tomblin	

TIMES OF SERVICES

Sunday Bible Classes	9:30 AM
Sunday Morning Assembly	10:30 AM
Sunday Evening Assembly	6:00 PM
Wednesday Bible Classes	7:30 PM

EVANGELIST & EDITOR:

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