

Seek The Old Paths

"Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths...and walk therein."

(Jeremiah 6:16)

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"TO SPEAK THY WORD WITH ALL BOLDNESS"

Matthew Carver

Boldness will cause men and women to speak when it is unpopular, even to the extent that such speech brings injury or harm to the one so speaking.

The above title is found in a prayer recorded in Acts 4:24-30 and is worded fully in this fashion: *"And now, Lord, look upon their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants to speak thy word with all boldness."*

Upon this occasion, the apostles Peter and John had just recently been released from prison after being examined by the Sanhedrin, the grand council of the Jews (Acts 4:15). This event transpired due to the healing of the lame beggar at the gate called Beautiful (Acts 3:2-7) and the subsequent sermon spoken by Peter as the multitude gathered around in astonishment at the miracle performed in their presence. In this sermon, Peter powerfully proclaimed Jesus as Christ and unflinchingly convicted the men of Israel of not only murdering the "Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead" (Acts 3:15), but of also possessing the unmitigated audacity to ask for a murderer to be given them in the place of Jesus (Acts 3:14). For this and other instruction given to the people (specifically that of the resurrection from the dead as proclaimed in Jesus), Peter and John were arrested and put in ward (Acts 4:2-3). The next day, after a brief inquiry by the Sanhedrin council and threats to the effect that Peter and John should no longer speak or teach in the name of Jesus, the two faithful

disciples were released and made their company once more with the disciples of Jerusalem. Upon hearing of the events with the Jewish rulers, the disciples burst forth in fervent prayer, petitioning God to provide them the boldness necessary to continue to proclaim the Gospel of Christ under the shadow of the ominous threatenings of the Jewish council.

The earnest desire expressed by the disciples to be granted *"to speak thy word with all boldness"* ought to find its way into the prayers of every faithful follower of the Lord in this age. In an era when truth is deemed subjective and morality considered relative, the followers of Christ must give the more diligence to expounding unto the lost and teeming masses the bedrock of Truth contained in the sacred volume of the Holy Bible. We must labor under the reality that all human-kind is lost without Him who is *"the way, the truth, and the life"* (John 14:6) and that for the seeking soul, only *"the truth shall make you free"* (John 8:32).

It behooves us to give brief attention to the qualities of **boldness**.

First, consider the very definition of boldness as derived from the original term *parrhesia*: "freedom in speaking; unreservedness in speech" (Thayer, 1967, p.491). Thayer also qualifies this definition by stating that such speech is performed "open-

ly, frankly, without concealment." Strong's concordance says it is "out-spokenness, frankness, bluntness."

If one were to study the history of the church of our Lord beginning in the book of Acts and continuing down to our modern age, one would find that the greatest periods of growth and development within the church were always characterized by men and women who defended and propagated the principles of Christ and His holy ambassadors in an open, frank, and unreserved style. Consider the earlier example of Peter who plainly and unequivocally informed his audience that *"ye denied the Holy One and the Just...and killed the Prince of life"* (Acts 3:14-15). He further stated that the people had acted in "ignorance" (Acts 3:17) when perpetuating this dark and murderous crime. But perhaps most importantly, he clearly defined what they must do to be reconciled to God once more and what the consequences would be if these terms were neglected: *"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord"* (Acts 3:19). This is a parallel directive to the one given in Peter's first sermon on the day of Pentecost in which he instructed believing inquirers to

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Speak With Boldness...



Editorial...

CAN A CHILD OF GOD BE LOST? #1

Garland M. Robinson

Can a Christian, a child of God, be lost? Can a servant of the Lord live or act in such a way that will cause him/her to be rejected by God at the judgment? Some men say no, God says yes.

A number of years ago, a tract was written by Sam Morris of the First Baptist Church in Samford, Texas, in which he stated,

“We take the position that a Christian’s sins do not damn his soul. The way a Christian lives, what he says, his character, his conduct or his attitude toward other people have nothing whatever to do with the salvation of his soul. ... All the prayers a man may pray, all the Bibles he may read, all the churches he may belong to, all the services he may attend, all the sermons he may practice, all the debts he may pay, all the ordinances he may observe, all the laws he may keep, all the benevolent acts he may perform will not make his soul one whit safer, and all the sins he may commit from idolatry to murder will not make his soul in any more danger...”

Mr. Morris has swallowed the doctrine of John Calvin (Calvinism), hook, line and sinker. He has followed this doctrine to its logical conclusion. According to this position, once a person is saved he can NEVER be lost under any circumstances. People are asked to just “take a blind leap in the dark” and accept their unfounded assertions.

The Bible teaching that a Christian can sin and be eternally lost is easily understood if we will be honest with ourselves and clear our minds completely of any preconceived ideas on the subject. Anyone can learn the

will of the Lord because the Bible was written to be understood (cf. Eph. 3:4). It’s not hard to understand. It’s so easy that a child can see it and understand it.

If the Bible teaches anything, it teaches that men and women can turn away from God and be lost. This fundamental doctrine is so common throughout the Scriptures that anyone can take their Bible, Old and New Testament combined, lay it on a desk with the spine facing downward, let it fall open and it is very likely that somewhere on those two facing pages you will find a point made or warning given about falling away from God, which causes eternal damnation unless one repents and turns back to God. Is there any doctrine more commonly discussed in all the Bible? Some who have taken the time to count such instances tell us that as many as 2,500 times the Bible speaks about the subject of falling away.

The Bible addresses the **DANGER** of falling away, **WARNS** against falling away, **PREDICTS** that some would fall away and gives **EXAMPLES** of those who did fall away. What more could be said than that?

It does not make any sense that God, being Holy (Lev. 20:7) and Just (Deut. 32:4) as He is, would totally ignore the rebellious will of human beings and save them when they refuse to obey His Will. Does that make any sense? Yet, there are many who believe so. Jesus made it clear that the only ones who would be saved are those who do the will of the Father. Matthew 7:21 quotes Jesus as saying, “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.” This implies that He would not save those who do not do His will.

THE DANGER AND WARNING OF FALLING AWAY

In Hebrews chapters three and four, exhortation is given to Christians warning them (us) of the danger of falling away because of not remaining faithful to the Lord; and thereby, says they will not be able to enter heaven’s promised land some day. As the people of Israel sinned by disbelief (disobedience) in the wilderness and were not able to enter the Promised Land, so Christians today can sin and not be able to enter our promised land, Heaven. Note what we read in Hebrews 3:10 – 4:11: “Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do always err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.) **Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end; While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation. ... But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? And to whom swear he that **they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief. Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. ... There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. ... Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.**”**

Israel of old had been cut off and rejected by God. Romans 11:11-12 says that “...through **their fall** salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness?”

Space does not allow us to examine all the Bible has to say on this subject. It would take the entire volume and many times over to explore

and discuss all the Bible has to say. But in the short space we have, let's list some of the passages that tell us Christians can fall away from God and be lost at the judgment.

1 Corinthians 10:12, *“Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.”* This passage doesn't make any sense at all if one cannot fall from grace and be eternally lost. The context in which this verse is found, speaks of the disbelief and disobedience of the children of Israel in the wilderness. The whole point is to warn Christians to NOT follow their example which will bring the displeasure of God and His swift condemnation just like it did to the Israelites. Notice what the text says, *“But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come”* (I Cor. 10:5-11).

The conclusion to be drawn and learned is, *“Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall”* (v.12). The children of Israel fell and as a result were rejected by God and not allowed to enter the promised land. Christians today can do the same thing and be rejected by God. Why else does the Holy Spirit mention this example but to warn us today to not do as they did. Our promised land is heaven. Our lives are lived in view of being allowed entrance into that land one day. But, if we follow the example of ancient Israel, we will end up like they did and will not be allowed to enter.

These verses and this example means NOTHING if Christians cannot fall away and be lost. This is wasted space in the Bible if they don't mean what they say. If one can't

fall, then why “take heed?”

1 Peter 5:8, *“Be sober; be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.”* If one cannot so sin as to lose his salvation, then why does God warn us about the devil? This verse says the devil can devour us. He either can devour us or he can not. Which is it? The Holy Spirit says he can. The word “devour” means to “drink down, gulp entirely (literally or figuratively), swallow.” If he devours us, we belong to him. He has his way with us. He is our master. Do you mean to say that the devil can devour a Christian and that Christian will still go to heaven? We know the devil cannot go to heaven, so what will he do, spit us back out come

judgment day? All those years one yields to his control and some believe that one will still go to heaven? Doesn't make any sense does it?

Why would God warn us about the devil anyway if we will be saved whether we serve the devil or serve God? As Christians, why would we bother with serving the Lord (which requires great care and devotion), if we can serve the devil (which doesn't take any effort at all), and still go to heaven? If you can figure that one out, then you believe in fairy tales.

If we can't be lost, the devil doesn't know it. Why else does he stalk the earth so desperately seeking to devour whomever will let him? His search is futile and in vain if men can't be lost.

Part 1 of 4

WHO IS IN AUTHORITY IN THE ABSENCE OF ELDERS?

Randy Kea

Without elders, a congregation can never function at the level it should. A careful reading of Titus 1:5 indicates: 1) a church without elders is not fully “set in order,” and 2) a church without elders has “things that are wanting.” Every step a congregation takes should be in the direction of ordaining elders. At the very least, the following things should be done:

1. The local preacher should regularly address this subject in specific detail.
2. All adult and teenage classes should study the eldership extensively.
3. A special training series should be conducted targeting men who are potential candidates for the eldership (include their wives). This ought to be done at least once a year. There are many sound, capable, and trusted men in the brotherhood who could help with such a series.

Who is in authority while this process is ongoing? Clearly a select “committee” would be wrong. There is no authority for such. One faithful man has no more “authority” than any other faithful man in the absence of elders. The work of the preacher is to “preach,” not “rule” (II Tim. 4:1-5). The Bible teaches “male” leadership in the church and home (Eph. 5:23-25; I Tim. 2:8-15; I Cor. 11:3).

With the above scriptural principles in mind, wisdom and expediency necessitate the following arrangement:

- 1) Preachers should teach, preach, and exhort the church to train and qualify men to be elders (Titus 1:5).
- 2) Women can under no circumstances “lead” or be in a “decision-making” position with reference to anything that pertains to the work of the church (I Tim. 2:8-15; I Cor. 11:3).
- 3) The faithful men collectively constitute the spiritual leadership in the absence of elders.
- 4) What is worse than having no elders is to ordain men who are not qualified.

100 Sweetbriar Walk, Stockbridge, GA 30281

Speak With Boldness...

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“...Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38). If these terms were not obeyed, the people would be placing themselves in the position of rejecting or otherwise failing to hearken unto the prophet of God, who is Jesus the Christ, thereby causing themselves to be “destroyed from among the people” (Acts 3:23). This message was stated clearly with no vague or imprecise terms. Further, it was this message and messages like these that led to the conversion of three thousand souls in one day (Acts 2:41) and enlarged the borders of the church of God to five thousand members by the time of the imprisonment of John and Peter (Acts 4:4). Surely, the most sweet-spirited and soft-tongued of preachers in our times could not argue with results such as these.

Consider yet another definition of the original term as given by Thayer (1967, p.491): “free and fearless confidence, cheerful courage, boldness, assurance.” The disciples of the early church fearlessly and courageously declared the good tidings of the kingdom of God. Recall the heroic response of Peter and the other apostles as they stood before the Jewish council in order to be reprimanded for the teaching they were doing throughout Jerusalem. They said, “We ought to obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29).

Remember the account of Stephen, that most noble of disciples who was full of grace and power and who ultimately forfeited his life for the testimony of Christ. With the calmness of one who possessed full assurance of the things which he spoke, he briefly emphasized the history of the Jewish people and their interactions with Jehovah. The culmination of his memorable sermon pointed to the stiff-necked and uncircumcised hearts and ears of those before him who did “always resist the Holy Spirit.” The charge was made that these men were of those who were “betrayers and murderers” of the “Righteous One” and, though they had received the law as it was

ordained by angels, “kept it not” (Acts 7:52-53). It was at this time that the professed religionists before Stephen revealed their true character and turned into a blood-thirsty mob that rushed him outside the city walls and violently executed him with stones. And yet it was to this Gospel preacher, after delivering such a sermon as this, while death was only moments away, that the privilege was granted of gazing upon the glory of God and viewing the precious figure of our Lord standing at the right hand of God (Acts 7:55-56).

Pay respect to a particular quality of boldness that is borne of the traits just reviewed. Boldness will cause men and women to speak when it is unpopular, even to the extent that such speech brings injury or harm to the one so speaking. We need only review the life of the apostle Paul in order to understand this statement. When defending his apostleship in his letters to the Corinthian brethren, Paul revealed what he had endured throughout the years on behalf of his testimony for Christ: “Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness” (II Cor. 11:24-27).

Surely, those episodes depicted by Paul and the scenes that were yet to be enacted in the lives of the early disciples, impress upon us the nature and character of boldness. It was with this spirit that the Gospel was proclaimed “to all creation which is under Heaven” (Col. 1:23).

Certainly, the examples of boldness given within the sacred accounts could be multiplied by examining further the life and exploits of the tireless Paul or the faithful and beloved disciple John. We could trace the journeys of the evangelist Phillip or study the stalwart leadership of James. Further, we could travel back centuries before these notable disciples and examine

the ministries of those righteous and holy prophets of God as revealed in the Old Testament. All of these ancient worthies were possessed of a fierce boldness to proclaim the word of the Most High God.

However, we need not pause here. Leap forward nearly 1800 years after the establishment of the church and consider the lives of those noble souls who sought to free their contemporaries from the fetters of humanly devised religious tradition. Recall the names of Barton W. Stone, Alexander Campbell, Walter Scott, and “Raccoon” John Smith and how they came together upon the basis of taking the Bible alone as their sole guide in matters pertaining to the religion of God. Recount the marvelous sermons and rich writings of J. W. McGarvey, Moses Lard, Benjamin Franklin, T. W. Brents, and Ashley S. Johnson. Study the polemic works of James A. Harding, G. C. Brewer, Foy E. Wallace, Jr. and others. Relive the battles for truth by N. B. Hardeman, Gus Nichols, Guy N. Woods, Thomas B. Warren, W. Curtis Porter and others as they affirmed the foundational truth of the New Testament religion in open and public discussion with propositions such as “The Scriptures teach that water baptism is for (in order to obtain) the remission of past sins”; “The Scriptures teach that a child of God may so sin as to finally be lost in Hell”; “The church of which I am a member is scriptural in doctrine and practice.” These men were the portraits of boldness in our most recent history. While filling every defining term inherent within the word, these brethren fought relentlessly to uphold the purity and truth of God’s holy word. They are worthy of our imitation.

In considering the lives of these venerable soldiers, as well as the lives of the historic figures found within the Book of God, we are compelled to make one final observation in regards to the boldness with which these men served Jehovah. Boldness (whether in the men portrayed in Holy Writ or in the modern followers of Christ today) cannot exist without conviction. Such conviction is depicted perfectly in the sentiment of Paul in 2 Timothy 1:12: “...for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that

which I have committed unto him against that day.”

If one truly believes that the Bible is the complete revelation of a Higher and Supreme Being and His efforts to save His lost and ruined creation, then one will do all that is within his power to know the divine revelation, commit it to his heart, and zealously carry out its precepts and mandates. One will then be able to powerfully, effectively, and boldly

hold aloft the flag of truth without fear, timidity, or wavering. This quality was the driving feature of those great and good men of faith who labored during the greatest periods of growth within the church. Because of this characteristic, the religious world knew that the church of Christ was different. It knew that we were not like all the rest. It knew that we desired to be Christians and Christians only in spite of the multitude of

religious and societal trends around us. It knew that we took nothing for our faith and practice that was not revealed within the hallowed Scriptures. It knew, simply, where we stood.

We ought all to pray “Lord, grant unto thy servants to speak thy word with all boldness,” that these things might be so again.

*118 Apple Drive
Auburn, KY 42206*

THE UNNECESSARY DEATH

Marlin Kilpatrick

Death is the common lot of mankind. Unless the Lord returns first, we will all die (Heb. 9:27). It was God who made the appointment, but it is man who will keep it.

The scriptures reveal two kinds of death: physical and spiritual. Physical death occurs when the spirit departs from the body. The apostle James wrote, “For the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also” (James 2:26). More people are familiar with physical death, than spiritual death. In fact, most people have little knowledge of spiritual death. Only the Bible tells us about spiritual death. And of all books, the Bible is the most often read, but it often misunderstood. Consequently, Satan uses our ignorance about spiritual things to ensnare us in a death that can be avoided. While physical death is an appointment we must all keep, spiritual death is an unnecessary death.

God has made all of the necessary provisions so man need not die spiritually. He began making these provisions with the very first prophecy in the Bible (Gen.3:15). When one studies the writings of the Old Testament prophets, he learns of a promised Redeemer (See esp.Isa.53). The virgin birth of Christ, foretold in prophecy (Isa.7:14; Matt.1:22,23), identifies the Source of our salvation, Jesus Christ. The sending of His Son into this world to redeem man from his sins was a provision of God, and like no other (John 3:16).

The death of Christ on Calvary’s cross makes possible our salvation from sin (Heb.2:9). The possibility of

salvation from our sins is offered to all, but only those who obey Jesus will be saved (Heb.5:8,9). The death of Christ accomplished several things. By his death, Jesus abolished the Old Law, and He became the mediator of the New Testament (Col. 2:14; Heb. 9:15-17). In his death, Jesus shed his blood which purchased the church (Acts 20:28). His death also, through his shed blood, provides the means whereby every faithful Christian may keep himself/herself cleansed from all sins (1 John 1:7). God, through his Son, has made every necessary provision for man to live eternally. Therefore, if men suffer spiritual death it is because they have failed to obey the gospel and live faithfully the Christian life (2 Thess. 1:7-9; Rev.2:10).

Friend, have you obeyed the gospel of Christ? Spiritual death is unnecessary. The gospel is God’s power unto salvation (Rom.1:16). To avoid an unnecessary death, one must obey the gospel. Our obedience involves the following: 1) hearing the truth, God’s word (Rom.10:17), 2) believing in God and his Son, Jesus Christ (Heb.11:6; John 8:24), 3) repentance from our sins, which involves a change of mind, leading to a reformation of life (Acts 17:30), 4) confession of our belief that Jesus is God’s Son (Acts 8:36,37), and 5) baptism (an immersion in water) for the forgiveness of our sins (Acts 2:38; 10:47,48). When one obeys these commands the Lord will add him to the church, the church of Christ (Acts 2:47).

Dear reader, why die an unnecessary death? Physical death we cannot avoid, but spiritual death we can

avoid by obedience to the gospel. Why not obey today? Tomorrow may be too late. Think about it.

*1336 Spring Lake Road
Fruitland Park, FL 34731
lmkilpatrick1@netzero.net*

CONTRIBUTIONS

Marcus & Gladys Hull	\$25
Midland C/C, Midland, MI	\$200
Baker C/C, Baker, FL	\$25
Mary McFaul	\$50
Anonymous	\$50
Anonymous	\$50
Ruby York	\$185
Bettye Zumbrum	\$100
Wallace & Reba Benjamin	\$50
Everette D. Poteet	\$25
Stuart Healy	\$200
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Arlington C/C, McMinnville, TN	\$50
Church of Christ, Tipton, IN	\$25
John E. Plummer	\$100
Berea C/C, McMinnville, TN	\$100
Irene Holland	\$15
Stephen & Susan Siligato	\$85
Anonymous	\$200
Marvin & Dathine Bellah (in Memory of Betty Cannody)	\$50
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Marlene Dyer	\$30
Anonymous	\$200
Arlington C/C, McMinnville, TN	\$50
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IS EVANGELISM DYING?

Lloyd Gale

In a recent column of the Christian Science Monitor, Michael Spencer wrote; “We Evangelicals have failed to pass on to our young people an orthodox form of faith that can take root and survive the secular onslaught. Ironically, the billion dollars we have spent on our youth ministers, Christian music, publishing, and media has produced a culture of young Christians who know next to nothing about their own faith except how they feel about it.”

SOME LESSONS TO BE LEARNED

It is evident that Michael Spencer is writing from a denominational viewpoint as he predicts a “major collapse of evangelical Christianity” to occur within ten years.” Spencer predicts that “about half of evangelical churches will die off in the next 25 to 30 yrs, due to generational reasons or because their members become more attracted to a secular version of life.”

MY OBSERVATIONS

For many years most denominations have been teaching that it does not matter which religion one follows — all may find acceptance with God.

At the same time, they have changed their creeds to accommodate what has become socially acceptable. To attract and hold members they have sought to learn and provide what society desires from religion. They have abandoned scripture and their appeal has been to make people feel good about themselves. Their religion has increasingly consisted of more heat and less and less light. They have come to despise the Biblical teaching of absolute objective truth and have encouraged the concept of individual subjective belief.

They invented the concept of gymnasiums, ball teams, children’s church, children ministers, youth directors, vacation craft schools, trips to six flags, entertainment and such like. Is it any mystery why those raised with such a concept of church and religion see the church as some sort of social agency or place of entertainment?

Now that many congregations of the church of Christ have stolen their methods, why be surprised at a generation of “change agents” among God’s people? Why is there such a lack of understanding of what consti-

tutes Biblical authority for what Christians are to believe, teach and practice? Why is there a trend toward acceptance of denominations and joining forces with them? After all, we played basketball and softball with them and we find them to be likable folks. Where are the Shepherds of the sheep? Under the haystack fast asleep?

Have many Christians and entire congregations gone too far now to turn back to the Lord? Have they passed the point of no return? My prayer is that many will see the folly of the direction they have been traveling and will understand that the Lord’s church is the pillar and ground of the truth (I Tim. 3:15).

The church is designed to worship and serve the Master. It’s work is to preach the Gospel, edify the church and benevolence. We must not add to or subtract from its mission. On judgment day, “What Will Your Answer Be?” Good song, better question.

*1186 Martin Leeville Rd.
Lebanon, TN 37090*

MAY WOMEN SERVE AS PASTORS? (THE CULTURAL ARGUMENT)

Douglas Hoff

I received a letter that asked about women serving as pastors. Since many people use the word pastor to refer to a preacher, the essence of the question was, “May a woman be a preacher?” First Timothy 2:11,12 gives the answer. God does not permit women to have spiritual leadership roles. That role was given to man in the beginning (Gen. 3:16) and was also true under the law of Moses (1 Cor. 14:34,35). It has not been altered or revoked under the new covenant. Ephesians 5:22-24 shows it is still in force today.

The questioner wondered if this restriction was *cultural* in nature or of a *temporary duration*. First, the

cultural argument is often made against certain prohibitions in the Bible. Some allege those limitations pertained only to the early church or a particular congregation (e.g., Corinth). If that were true, how would we know when the time period ended along with its prohibitions? There is no specific indication of any event marking the termination of those commands. Likewise, if the restrictions were based on culture, how would we know when the culture had changed sufficiently for them to be lifted?

Second, it is true some things were based on accommodating cul-

ture. A good example of this is the wearing of a veil or head covering that Paul mentions in 1 Corinthians 11:2-13. At one time, this practice indicated that a woman was a harlot (Gen. 38:14,15). By the first century, however, at least in Corinth, it had undergone a 180 degree reversal. Then, it was shameful for a woman to appear in public without wearing a veil or head covering. That is why Paul told the Corinthians to judge among yourselves. Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered (1 Cor. 11:13)? In such instances it is usually obvious the subject under consideration is based

on culture. But when it comes to women being forbidden to take a spiritual leadership role, there is nothing in the context even hinting at a cultural limitation.

Third, Paul indicated that the things he wrote were the commandments of the Lord (1 Cor. 14:37). This is important since just three verses before, he gave the restriction on women speaking in the church (i.e., assembly). It is significant that Paul says verse 34 is a command of the Lord and not his (i.e., Paul's) opinion.

Fourth, in his letter to Timothy, Paul reveals that the role of women does not extend to public teaching which involves the exercise of

authority over men (1 Tim. 2:11,12). The reason for this is based on the order of God's creation (vs.13,14), not culture. This is a timeless principle. The same restriction existed under the Law of Moses (1 Cor. 14:34).

Finally, it is not even scripturally possible for a woman to serve as a pastor. Why? Because a pastor must be the husband of one wife (1 Tim. 3:2). Granted, verse one is speaking of bishops. However, they are the same group of men known as elders or pastors. See also Titus 1:5-7 where the two words are used interchangeably. Compare this with 1 Peter 5:1,2 (1 Peter 5:1,2, NKJV). *"The elders which are among you I exhort, who*

am also an elder...Feed (tend, shepherd) the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight..." From this passage, one can see that elders are also known as overseers. They are to shepherd the flock which is the work of pastors. Thus, pastors are also known as elders. The word bishop simply means an overseer.

One last point can and should be made. Preachers and pastors are two different groups of men. Preachers preach and pastors are to oversee (i.e., lead) the congregation (John 10:2,3).

24735 Huron River Dr.
Rockwood, MI 48173

PRAYING FOR THOSE IN POWER

Wade Webster

Paul instructed Timothy, and the saints with whom he was working, to pray "for kings" and for "all that are in authority" that they might "lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty" (1 Tim. 2:1-8). Certainly, the same holds true for us today. Realizing the great power that government wields over our lives, we need to commit to praying daily for our national, state, and local leaders. In Paul's inspired words to Timothy, we find four reasons to pray for those in power.

IT IS PRESCRIBED

We read, *"I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men: For kings, and for all that are in authority"* (1 Tim. 2:1-2). The word "exhort" means "to call for." By inspiration, Paul was calling Timothy and others to pray for leaders. Paul knew that government was ordained of God to be a minister for good (Rom. 13). However, he knew that government was dependent upon the prayers of Christians (Ezra 6:10; 7:23).

IT IS PROFITABLE

Paul exhorted Timothy and us to pray for those in power so that *"we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty"* (1 Tim. 2:2). "Quiet" means "tranquil" and

"peaceable" means "undisturbed." To the captives, Jeremiah wrote, *"And seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the LORD for it: for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace"* (Jer. 29:7). Those in positions of authority have a great effect upon the lives of God's children. Some bless our lives while others are a curse. Rulers like Cyrus and Artaxerxes were a blessing. They let captives return to their homeland and rebuild. Other leaders like Pharaoh (Exodus 1), Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 3), Darius (Dan. 6), Herod (Matt. 2), the Jewish authorities (Acts 4:18; 5:42), and Nero (2 Tim. 4:6-8) were a curse. They made the lives of God's children extremely difficult. We need to pray for those in power so that we might have peace and prosperity.

IT IS PLEASING

We read, *"For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth"* (1 Tim. 2:3-4). The word "acceptable" means "agreeable." Praying for those in authority is in agreement with God's will. It is consistent with God's desire for all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth (2 Peter 3:9; John 3:16). As you know, some governments enact policies that aid the

spread of the Gospel while others enact policies that hinder its spread. God wants us to pray for rulers to make the right decisions.

IT IS POWERFUL

Paul wrote, *"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus"* (1 Tim. 2:5). The prayers of saints are powerful because they are on speaking terms with the only mediator (Matt. 19:26; 1 John 5:14-15; Phil. 4:12). No one else in the nation has this privilege and source of power. Do you recall the situation in Babylon when Nebuchadnezzar had a dream and couldn't remember it? If you do, then you recall that only Daniel and his three friends could give the dream and its interpretation because they were the only ones who knew the God who reveals secrets (Dan. 2:24-30). Today, Christians are the ones who have the connection to the God who rules the universe. The prayers of the righteous avail much (James 5:16-18).

Each of us needs to commit to praying daily for those in positions of power. Religious freedom, marriage, and the lives of millions of unborn babies all hang in the balance.

1458 Flint Lock Dr.
Hernando, MS 38632



SEEK THE OLD PATHS

The following people would like to request *Seek The Old Paths* to be sent to their home each month. It is an interesting publication and we greatly appreciate your offer to send it. Thank you for the work you are doing. God bless" ...**Wewoka Church of Christ, Wewoka, OK.** "I have just finished reading two of your wonderful, spirit-filled writings in the May & June issues of STOP magazine that my mother let me read. I would really like to be put on your mailing list because my mother wants hers back. I'm a Christian at the church of Christ here. I think the reading in the STOP magazine is so truthful and inspiring. Keep up the good work for the cause of Christ" ...**Rosetta Roberson, Monticello, GA.** "I'm writing about STOP. A few months back I asked for and began getting this publication. I wonder if you ever send back issues? I am missing Nov/08 and Feb/09. I'm pretty sure I loaned them out and never got them back. If it is your policy to send back issues, I would be most grateful if you would send these" ...**Geneva Stark, Eufaula, OK.** [EDITOR'S NOTE: We are happy to mail back issues to those who can use them. Thanks]. "Thanks for keeping me on the mailing of the "Old Paths." Keep up the good works. It has been a blessing to me" ...**Euna Geeter, Summerville, GA.** "I sure appreciate STOP and all you and others are doing to teach the Truth" ...**name withheld, TN.** "Thank you. Thank you" ...**Bettye Zumbun, Delton, FL.** "First and foremost, God bless you and all that are in His service. You published a letter I wrote to you a few months back and since then I have received some letters from others who want to help and are concerned about my situation. First, I want to thank each and every one. I have lived for 43 years a very selfish and a very blind life. God has blessed me in so many ways that I could not list them all. Like so many others, I would pride myself on being self dependent and would glory myself for all my success, but could not understand why I failed so miserably until the day I got arrested in 2005. It was then that I was motivated to change (just not sure how). I did not get to court till 2007. Till then I had improved my life 100% from what it was, but was still missing a great savior. The judge sentenced me to 8 years and while I was in a 6x10 cell 23 hours a day, I read the Bible for the first time. The date was Jan. 14, 2008. I was blown away! For the next six weeks I read this book three times. Mind you, I may not have been getting as much as I should have from it, but I sure was getting familiar with it. I was sent to Carroll County prison February 8 and have been here for over one year now and in that time I have grown to be a very strong baby. I tell people all the time about my creator and about the relationship I have and how I came to be so close to Him. See, I may be locked up but I am free, free to keep my eyes on Him! People who are free have to go to work, spend time with their family, they have other responsibilities, but I have only one: to get to know my creator in the utmost intimate way I can. I pray, study, pray, study, pray every day and because he has sent wonderful Christians my way, I have been able to grow and mature at a breathtaking rate. I have read His words over and over: (1) Hear, (2) Believe, I believe in the Gospel with all my heart. (3) Repent, I have repented (I have turned from my sinful ways), (4) Confess, I confess to any and everyone that Jesus is the Son of God. Now here is where the problem came in. Here in Carroll County prison, they do not allow baptism. So for ten months I prayed for this to change and then the chaplain died and a new one took over, so I had hope, but these people don't believe you have to be baptized to be saved. I myself know that I'm commanded to believe and be baptized. I ask some ministers of the church of Christ about who could baptize and found that it was not so much as "who" baptized you but "whom" was being baptized in the name of Jesus Christ (they being immersed or completely submerged in water). So, not being the baptism I would have preferred, but like the word says, "he will provide," so at 2:30am one morn-

ing I was baptized in a large trash can. Call it "trash can salvation" if you will. Of course some people, for their own reasons, don't agree, but all that matters to me is on that morning I was added to the church of Christ and that is what was important to me, being obedient to him. So to the fellow from Arkansas (I think it might be church of Christ at 102 S Walnut Warren, AR), I am a Christian and I am a warrior for Jesus Christ. I do seek the fellowship with you and all who are in His service. There is a lot of work to be done right here and I ask for any and all help I can get if anyone out there has any tracts or other material, please, please, send it to me so I can pass on to others in here. I love all of you and I thank God for you. Thank you Mr. Robinson for your work! When I get out, one of the first things I'd like to do is contribute to your works for Him. Until then, you have my time at your disposal. All you have to do is ask. Thank you and God bless you" ...**Danny Frazier #662263 A-11, 96 Horsley Mill Rd., Carrollton, GA 30117.** "Dear brethren, Greetings from our congregation Nempi Church of Christ. Brethren, I am writing to request for some Bible literature from you that will help our congregation like, new or used bibles, leaflets, sermon tapes or Cds, bible class materials, sermon books, song books and other materials within your reach for our use and our Christian library. Please send in bulk, we doesn't get literature easily so I hope you will help our congregation for the materials mentioned above. Praying for the fund for shipping it here. In Christ" ...**Mr. Ezehael L. Mbaenyi, NEMPI CHURCH OF CHRIST, P.O. Box 23 NEMPI, ORU WEST L.G.A, IMO STATE 474004 NIGERIA.** "Keep up the good work. Here are some funds to help" ...**Jim Parsley, Columbus, NE.** "You are doing a great work that is needed so much in this world today. We have been getting *Seek the Old Paths* for many years" ...**Buddy & Charlotte Smith, Hornbeak, TN.** "I need to get the STOP paper going again to my mother-in-law, now in assisted living. Her paper has stopped and it used to come to my house directly to her. Please resume the mailing to Hibernia Weaver. Thanks" ...**Cathy Weaver, Springdale, AR.**

Seek The Old Paths is a monthly publication of the **East End Church of Christ** and is under the oversight of its elders. It is mailed **FREE** upon request. Its primary purpose and goal in publication can be found in Jude 3; II Timothy 4:2; Titus 1:13; Titus 2:1; II Peter 1:12. All mail received may be published unless otherwise noted. Articles are also welcomed.

Editor: **Garland M. Robinson**

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EAST END CHURCH OF CHRIST
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My family and I appreciate your prayers, encouragement and contributions as we continue to raise funds for our financial support. I want you to know how much you mean to us. Thank you so much. The date of our new work was delayed a little, but officially begins September 1, 2009 when **Kevin Key** begins his work as the preacher for the East End church of Christ. We welcome him to the work at East End. There is plenty for us to do. —*Garland M. Robinson*