

Our purpose is to “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints,” and to “prove all things; hold fast that which is good.”

OLD PATHS ADVOCATE

“To continue speaking the truth in love,” “endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace,” “keeping the ordinance as delivered.”

“Thus saith the Lord, ‘stand ye in the ways, and see and ask for the Old Paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest of your souls.’ (Jer. 6:16) “And they that be of Thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The Repairer of the Breach, The Restorer of Paths to Dwell in.” (Isa. 58:12).

VOL. XCII

LEBANON, MISSOURI • AUGUST 2020

NO. 8

I AM NOT ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL

By CARL M. JOHNSON

Paul’s letter to the Romans is sometimes referred to as the clearest gospel of all. He writes the letter to the Romans from Corinth during his third missionary journey. He has taken up a collection from the Gentile churches in Asia and Europe and is taking it to Jerusalem to relieve the poor saints in Judea (Rom. 15:25). While Paul knows several people in Rome, he has never actually been there. He has preached the gospel in Tarsus, the city of his birth; Jerusalem—the world’s Holy City; Antioch—Golden City on the Orantes River; Ephesus—home of Diana, the greatest temple in the world; Athens—home of the greatest philosophers in the world; and as he writes this letter he is preaching in Corinth—the greatest metropolis in Greece. Yet, he has never preached in Rome. It seems that every time he decides to go something hinders him.

Paul, therefore, takes great pains in his introduction to tell the Romans he anxiously wants to visit, and he has definite plans to visit after he delivers the collection to Jerusalem. He plans to travel to Spain and he wants to come by Rome en route (Rom. 15:25).

Because of his frequent failures to get to Rome, some of his detractors take the view that Paul is afraid. “He can preach at Jerusalem, Antioch, Athens, and Corinth, but preaching at Rome is a different story!” “Rome is the capital of the world, with its grandeur, cruelty, wickedness, superstition, pomp, and power, and Paul is afraid.”

Paul’s enemies also twist his words to distort the message he has been preaching to the Gentiles concerning salvation by grace. Paul says “we are justified freely by God’s grace ... and where sin abounds, grace does much more abound” (Rom. 3:24; 5:20).

Paul’s antagonists argue, “If grace is provided as an

antidote to sin, I can sin all I want and receive all the grace I need—grace becomes a license to sin!”

Paul sharply refutes the accusation and he tells the Romans upfront he is not ashamed of the Gospel he has been preaching among the Gentiles and is ready to preach it at Rome also (1:15-16). He then proceeds to lay out systematically in this letter what he has been preaching concerning sin, righteousness, Gospel, law, faith, hope, love, obedience, justification, salvation, adoption, and election. He wants the Romans to get what he has been preaching straight from the horse’s mouth, directly from Paul’s own pen. Consequently, Paul’s letter to the Romans becomes the most complete doctrinal treatise in the NT.

The word “Gospel” means “good news, or good tidings.” The old English expression is “God Spell”—Good news spelled out by God Himself. Jesus began His ministry preaching the Gospel of the kingdom of God (Mk. 1:14), and ended His earthly ministry by commanding His disciples to “Go...preach the Gospel to every creature” (Mk. 16:16).

Primarily, the Good News is the story about the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (1 Cor. 15:1-4). The story, however, requires obedience. Both Paul and Peter tell us we must obey the Gospel (Rom. 10:16; 1 Pet. 4:17; 1 Thes. 1:7-8).

Walter Scott was a key figure in the American Restoration Movement during the 1800’s. He traveled from town to town preaching in western Pennsylvania and eastern Ohio. He would ask permission to use the school building and then walk around telling people he would be preaching that night. On one occasion he met a boy and introduced himself as a Gospel preacher. He told the boy, “Go home and tell your folks we are going to have preaching tonight at the school house.”

The boy asks, “What’s Gospel preaching?”

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SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Single Subscription One Year..... \$15.00
Also On The Internet
Published Monthly by **Old Paths Advocate**, Lebanon, MO
A.C. Brockman, 2033 King James, Lebanon, MO 65536
periodical postage paid at Lebanon, MO 65536
Send Form 3579 to **Old Paths Advocate**
1147 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA 94550.

All articles published in **Old Paths Advocate** contain the view of the writer and do not necessarily reflect the views of the editors and publishers. If you have any questions, please direct them to the author listed at the heading of the article.

Editorial

THINK ON THESE THINGS

By DON L. KING

In Hebrews chapter eleven, often called “Faith’s Honor Role, “the apostle Paul goes into great detail to recount the history of God’s people. He points out in verse one: “...faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” We believe Paul intended to encourage Israel not only to be faithful, but to renew their faith and patience as they waited for all to transpire. They needed to see, by the eye of faith, for what they earnestly “hoped.” He wrote extensively of the accomplishments of many because of their faith. The word “faith” here means their conviction, or assurance that God’s promises would be fulfilled. This was great encouragement to be what they needed to be. It also served as warning. They were to assume that failure to measure up to the examples related by the apostle would result in punishment.

The entire chapter is profound. However, verses 39 and 40 is the climax: “And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: (Verse 40) God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be perfect.” Macknight, in his commentary on this verse said:” The reason is, God having foreseen, that by the gospel he would bestow some better means of faith on us, in order to our becoming Abraham’s spiritual seed, resolved, that the ancients without us should not be made perfect by receiving the promised heavenly country. For He determined that the whole spiritual seed of Abraham, raised from the dead, shall be introduced into that country in a body at one and the same time, namely, after the general judgment.”

If we boil this chapter down, it appears that Paul mentioned these Old Testament heroes in order to encourage all who followed to be faithful and careful to believe God AND obey Him. A thorough study of the chapter is heartbreaking as we realize how difficult it was for those old people of God. We know that some failed to do that just as some today fail to follow God’s commandments to the letter. Notice: (Hebrews 11:37) “They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted tormented.” 2 Samuel 12:31 mentions that the

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QUERIST COLUMN

By CLINT DEFRANCE

Question: Does Matthew 18.20 authorize two or more Christians to have a worship service?

Answer: In answer to the question above: no. Matthew 18.20 says, "For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them." Note that the passage does not say: "two or more" - rather, it says "two or three." This is a reference to Deuteronomy 17.6 and 19.15 regarding the power of a two or threefold witness in a criminal case. In the context of Matthew 18, Jesus is teaching about a case of church discipline. Note carefully: "Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that 'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.' And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector. Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them" (Matthew 18.15-20, emphasis added).

Matthew 18.18-20 offers a series of encouragements to the congregation during the difficult and daunting process of discipline: verse 18 -when the congregation disciplines or restores according to the Lord's teaching, they are simply reflecting on earth the will and work of God in heaven; verse 19-when the process is carried out according to God's will, God will grant the prayers and requests of the church, either for restoration or excommunication and chastisement; verse 20 - when the process follows God's teachings of justice and integrity, Jesus himself is present with the witnesses supporting and establishing the truth of the their testimony.

These verses should be very precious to the church that faces the task of discipline, however they absolutely do not teach that "two or more Christians" can worship together as if they were a church when they are clearly not. In fact, Jesus makes a distinction between the "two or three" and "the church" in this very context! A church, or congregation, is a formally united body of believers who intend to grow and mature, to ordain elders, to

create a treasury for the work of God's kingdom, to evangelize, to worship on the first day of every week, and to assist one another to find full placement and participation in the function of the body for the glory of Christ. Anything less than that is not and cannot be a congregation.

Question: What should a congregation do if someone is overlooked with the loaf, but does not inform anyone until after the Lord's Supper is finished? Or if someone arrives late for services and the Lord's Supper has already been observed?

Answer: This question may be reasonably answered from the implications of those statements about the nature of the Lord's Supper and its observance by the early Christians. The Lord's Supper must be observed by the whole church (as many as are able to attend) when they are gathered together into one place (1 Corinthians 11.20). The first part of the Lord's Supper is "the communion of the body" - in which all partake of the one loaf. The second part of the Lord's Supper is "the communion of the blood" - in which all partake of the one cup containing the fruit of the vine (1 Corinthians 10.16-17). Communion means, "joint participation" -this is the reason the Lord's Supper involved sharing one loaf and one cup, in one assembly, at one time. The disciples "come together to break the loaf" (Acts 20.7). It is no part of the New Testament pattern to offer a second serving of the Lord's Supper to those who did not partake the first time. Congregations should be careful to select a time to eat the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week when all can be present and the Christians should be careful to attend and participate. We may change our own arrangements, but we may never change God's arrangements.

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Old Paths Advocate

P.O. Box 1038

Lebanon, MO 65536

\$15 for one year

MCGARVEY ON FELLOWSHIP

BY JOHNNY ELMORE

That J.W. McGarvey, the little giant of the Restoration Movement, was opposed to instrumental music in worship, is a fact too well known to be disputed. While in Lexington, KY some years ago, my wife and I visited the Broadway Christian Church, where McGarvey preached and held membership for many years. We were met by Marshall Leggett, who was then the personable minister of that church. He proudly pointed to a large picture of McGarvey hanging on the wall and remarked, "He left when they put in the instrument" Leroy Garrett, writing in *One Body*, recently acknowledged that McGarvey "objected to the instrument as much as anyone in our history." Garrett then quoted McGarvey as saying, "I have never proposed to withdraw fellowship from brethren simply because of their use of instrumental music in worship."

However, I have read a quote several times in different papers which was attributed to McGarvey which indicates that he felt that he had made a mistake in his approach to fellowship and the use of the instrument in worship. The latest version appears in *Firm Foundation*, April 8, 1986. It is an account of an exchange between McGarvey and Jesse P. Sewell in which McGarvey reportedly said, "Brother Sewell, I want to say something to you, if you'll accept it in the spirit in which I mean it." Sewell told him he'd appreciate anything he had to say to him, and Sewell gave this account of his statement: "You are on the right road, and whatever you do, don't let anybody persuade you that you can successfully combat error by fellowshiping it and going along with it. I have tried. I believed at the start that was the only way to do it. I've never held membership in a congregation that uses instrumental music. I have, however, accepted invitations to preach without distinction between churches that used it and churches that didn't. I've gone along with their papers and magazines and things of that sort. During all these years I have taught the truth as the New Testament teaches it to every young preacher who has passed through the College of the Bible. Yet, I do not know of more than six of those men who are preaching the truth today. It won't work." This was about ten years before McGarvey's death in 1912.

I would like to point out to my brethren that McGarvey was also opposed to individual communion cups. Can we learn a lesson from McGarvey as he viewed the scene at the twilight of his illustrious career? Does his

statement tell us anything about the folly of lending influence and encouragement to something that is wrong? No doubt, McGarvey thought he was doing the right thing, but if this quote is accurate, he came to see the inconsistency of his course. McGarvey believed the instrument in worship and individual cups were fads that would pass away with the passing of the years, but perhaps he came to see that "Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone" (Hos 4:19).

If I know my own heart, I can say that I have nothing but the kindest feelings for brethren who have embraced Sunday School, individual cups in the communion, and instrumental music in worship. I am concerned about them and I pray that they may come to a knowledge of the truth. I sincerely and fervently hope that the day may come when we can lock arms and fight the evils of sin and division together, but I am convinced that I will never bring them to a knowledge of the truth by joining in with them in their error.

Some years ago a man said to me. "If I were to ever begin preaching, I would start in the beer joints and taverns." At the time, I thought there might be some validity in his statement. But in the light of clearer thinking, I realize that many of those who are in those places are there by choice and may even be there because they know they are in a place which is void of anything resembling gospel preaching. What influence would I have if I walked in and made myself comfortable in their midst?

I say that McGarvey gave good advice. In the quest for that unity which the psalmist David declared to be both good and pleasant, (Psalm 133:1), let us never be tempted to stray into the paths of error. Remember, our light may be the only one those in error will ever see.

THE GOSPEL PAUL PREACHED

BY PAUL O. NICHOLS

The Gospel which was preached by the apostle Paul was not something he had learned from other men. He was a chosen vessel of the Lord, and the message he carried to the world is what he had received through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. "But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal. 1:11, 12).

His teaching did not depend on what he had heard from others. He states, "But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me

by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother." Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not" (Gal. 1:15-20).

The apostle Paul knew that the gospel he was inspired to preach was adequate in itself; without any addition from him or anyone else. He declared, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:16, 17). He was so grateful for his own salvation that he states, "I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness" (Romans 1:14-18).

Wherever Paul traveled, he preached about God. He was, "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God..." (Rom.1:1). He also called it the gospel of Christ. He says, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth..." (Rom. 1:16). When he preached the gospel, he glorified both the Father and the Son. He wrote to the Corinthians, "For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake" (2 Cor. 4:5). He also preached and wrote more about the church than any other apostle. He tried to make people understand the beauty and the value of the church. It was bought with the blood of Jesus, and in a spiritual sense is the bride of Christ (Acts 20:28), and the apostle says Christ loved the church and gave himself for it (Eph. 5:25).

Paul was more educated than some of the other apostles. He was brought up under the tutelage of the noted

doctor of the law, Gamaliel, and became the exalted Saul of Tarsus, a Pharisee among the Jews. But after he obeyed the gospel and became a servant of Christ, he gave up his title of eminence, and became known as Paul, an apostle and servant of Jesus Christ. And by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit wrote more than half of the books of the New Testament. He was willing to spend his life in the Lord's service, to save as many lost sinners as he could. He was willing to suffer all kinds of privation, abuse and physical maltreatment for the Cause of our Lord, and he could honestly say, "Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you (Phil 4:9).

IS IT HELPFUL?

BY AARON BOONE

As a Christian, viewing the evil that persists in the world today is a reminder of Lot, who is said to have "tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds" (2 Peter 2:8). The wickedness of this world seems ever-present before our eyes. It is even more obvious, as we listen to friends confess the hardships they face--some because of the color of their skin.

Unfortunately, instead of empathy and compassion, many are made to feel as if their existence can be narrowed down to statistics that do not fit their reality. Those who use statistics in such a way are seeking to win an argument and not win a brother. This type of argumentation is not fruitful in the Christian's ultimate goal of seeking the lost and promoting unity within the body of Christ. Do not misunderstand truth is essential but so is our relationship with other people.

Paul says his ultimate goal was to seek the profit of all men by helping them "be saved" (1 Corinthians 10:33); in the same way, our ultimate goal is to help those lost in sin take hold of the promise of salvation. Likewise, as Christians, we are to promote unity and peace within the body of Christ (Romans 15:19). Can we truly believe that arguing will ultimately help win the lost and encourage unity? Not so, when we are causing our brothers and sisters to feel as if they are nothing more than a statistic. Seeking to win the argument is an unfruitful way to win the soul and build unity. Instead, Paul provides us with some helpful ways to consider our words during this season of distress.

First, we must always ask, "Is what I am about to say or

share helpful.” When writing to the church in Corinth, Paul gives a glimpse into his mind saying, “All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful...” (1 Corinthians 10:23). Paul’s ultimate goal in life was to be helpful, not so much in a physical sense, but in a spiritual sense. Paul wanted to help every person he came in contact with to come to the knowledge of the truth. Paul tells the Christians in Ephesus to use their speech in a way that “is good for necessary edification” (Ephesians 4:29). Does this statement mean Paul perverted the truth of the Gospel? Far from it! Instead, he sought words that would help convert the lost and promote growth within the body. He even went so far as to say he would never eat meat again if it would cause his brother to stumble (1 Corinthians 8: 13). Are we willing to be helpful to someone to the extent that we would never eat meat again?

Second, Paul’s actions and words had the singular purpose of glorifying God. Again, to the church in Corinth, Paul says, “whatever you do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Corinthians 10:31). The strife, conflict, and hurt that arises when individuals ignore the real-life experiences of others stand in opposition to the wisdom of the Proverbs. The wise Solomon says of those who cause strife and conflict, “It is honorable for a man to stop striving (avoid strife) since any fool can start a quarrel” (Proverbs 20:3). God receives no glory when we pursue that which causes strife. Instead of seeking to push our point of view, Solomon says wisdom comes from “seeking advice” (Proverbs 13:10). It is always productive to listen; and where disagreement occurs, our response must seek to glorify God.

Third, Paul says we as Christians are to “give no offense, either to the Jews or to the Gentiles, or to the Church of God” (1 Corinthians 10:32). This word “offense” speaks of “not causing to stumble” or acting as “a smooth road” (Thayer, 2531). Yes, it is true, each person will be held accountable for his own sin (Ezekiel 18:20), but it is also true that each Christian has the command to act as “a smooth road” to salvation for the rest of the world. We must take into consideration the question, “Will this comment negatively affect my ability to evangelize the person I am speaking with?” before we hit “post” on our keyboards. If we are not careful, our failure to show empathy will act as a stumbling block in our evangelistic efforts. Paul’s words in Romans 12:18 are applicable today: “as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.” Whatever we bring to a conversation must have peace as its ultimate goal.

Yes, there is unrest all over the world, but the last

thing this world needs is for those who should be empathetic and humble to act in a way that causes more heartache and strife. Surely Paul, our ultimate example (1 Corinthians 11:1), felt frustrated with the world around him. Nevertheless, throughout this frustration, he was able to accomplish his ultimate goal of calling the lost and seeking unity in the body of Christ through the simple mantra, “Is it helpful?” It is possible today, by imitating Paul, to accomplish this same incredible goal. Wisdom dictates that we should stop and ask if what we are doing will help promote the Gospel call of salvation?

DESIRING THE OFFICE OF AN ELDER

BY AUBRY SMITH

Who should desire the office of an elder?

In relinquishing his position as an elder in the church of Christ, James A. Garfield famously said “I resign the highest office in the land to become President of the United States.” (New World Encyclopedia). While one may question why Garfield would be willing to step down from his position in the church to a lesser role as head of state, he expressed the sentiment with which every member of the LORD’s body should view the eldership. There is no higher office. No more important work. Yet few men are filling that role today. This is due in significant part to the lack of desire of most Christian men.

Paul wrote to Timothy in 1 Timothy 3:1 “This is a true saying, if a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.” (KJV). This passage is followed by a listing of the qualifications that a man must meet before he can be appointed as an elder. There is some controversy over whether the man’s desire for the office is the first qualification, or whether those qualifications begin in 1 Timothy 3:2. Regardless of an individual’s views on the ‘desire for the office’ as a qualification, it is necessary in order for a man to be appointed to the position that he desires the position. If a man truly does not want the office it is unlikely that he meets all of the qualifications Paul goes on to list. Furthermore, a man who does not want to do a job will tend to approach it with the wrong attitude if he is forced into the work, and is liable to do the job poorly. No one should be forced into the role of shepherd of the flock of God. Whether or not ‘desire for the office’ is a qualification, 1 Timothy 3:1 teaches two things clearly.

One is that all those who do desire the office desire a good work. Hebrews 13:17 reads “Obey them that

have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief for that is unprofitable for you. “ (KJV). Paul called the Ephesian elders to himself in Acts 20 and said to them (beginning in verse 28) “28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. 29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. 31 Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears. “ (KJV). Our elders are tasked with guiding and guarding our souls. The blood-bought church of God is always subject to attack, and its members need loving guidance as well as protection. It is impossible to imagine a more excellent, more important, or more desirable work available to the God-fearing Christian man.

It is important to note before continuing with the brief analysis of 1 Timothy 3:1, that though it is a good work, some men desire the eldership for the wrong reason. Peter writes in 1 Peter 5:1-4 “1 The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: 2 Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; 3 Neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. 4 And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.” (KJV). Desire for the office should come from a place of humble desire to do whatever one can in the service of his LORD. Only an unqualified man would use the office as a means of dishonest gain or as a way to ‘lord’ over others. A true servant of God will use the office to serve and help others (Luke 22:24-27).

The second principle that 1 Timothy 3:1 and its immediate context make clear is that we are not to appoint just anyone who wants to be appointed; instead, for a man to be appointed, he has to be qualified. Many view the qualifications as being difficult to impossible to meet. It is a common perception that an elder is practically superhuman, and no average Christian could ever approach meeting the standards as set forth in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. However, if these standards are examined in detail, it becomes apparent that the average Christian man is expected to meet many (if not all) of

the qualifications toward the latter end of his life. In the following chart, the qualifications as given in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 are listed along with other passages located elsewhere in scripture which teach the same principles in other contexts. In some cases, the Greek word used in the list of qualifications is used elsewhere and the relevant usages are given. In other cases, the principle is discussed elsewhere although the exact Greek word corresponding to the qualification is not used.

1 Timothy 3 (KJV)	Other uses of the word/other passages that deal with the same subject
Blameless (anapilemptos).	1 Tim. 5:7 - Widows indeed are to be “anapilemptos.” 1 Tim. 6:14 - Young Timothy is to be “anapilemptos.”
The husband of one wife.	Genesis 2:24 says that a man should leave his father and mother when he is joined with his wife, and become “one flesh” with her. Ephesians 5:25 teaches that husbands are to love their wives as Christ loved the church. All married men should aspire to so fulfill their husbandly duty as to meet this qualification by the time they are of age.
Vigilant (nephaios).	1 Tim. 3:11 - Also required of the wives of elders and deacons. Titus 2:2 - Older men in general are expected to be “nephaios”
Sober (sophron).	Titus 2:2 - Older men in general are expected to be “sophron.” Titus 2:5 - Older women are to be “sophron.”
Of good behavior (kosmios).	1 Tim. 2:9 - Women are to dress in “kosmios” apparel.
Given to hospitality (philoxenos).	1 Pet. 4:9 - Peter encourages all Christians to use “philoxenos.”
Apt to teach (didaktikos).	2 Tim. 2:24 - The ‘servant of the LORD’ must be “didaktikos.”
Not given to wine.	Ephesians 5:18, Galatians 5:21, and other passages teach that drunkenness is forbidden for all Christians.
No striker (plektes).	Jesus taught in Matt. 5:39 that if someone slaps us on one cheek, we should turn the other toward him instead of acting out

	violently. 1 Peter 3:9 teaches that we are to repay evil with blessing.	Titus 1 (KJV)	Other uses of the word/other passages that deal with the same subject
Not greedy of filthy lucre (aischrokerdes).	Jesus taught in Matt. 6:24 that it is impossible to serve both God and money, and Paul taught later in 1 Tim. 6: 10 that the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil.	Blameless (aneglektos).	Col. 1:22 - All who have been reconciled through the blood of Christ can be presented "aneglektos" in God's sight if they remain faithful. 1 Tim. 3:10 - Deacons must be "aneglektos" as well.
Patient (epicikcs).	Philippians 4:5 - Paul encourages the Philippians to let their "epieikes" be known unto all men. Titus 3:2 - Titus is to put the other Christians in mind to be "epieikes." James 3: 17 -A truly wise man is "epieikes." 1 Pet. 2:18 - Servants are to be "epieikes."	Not self-willed.	Peter said those who walk after the flesh are "authades" (translated "self-willed" in Titus 1:7) in 2 Pet. 2:10. Every Christian should desire a different path.
Not a brawler (amachos).	Titus 3:2 - Titus is to put the other Christians in mind to be "amachos."	Not soon angry.	James says in James 1 :19 that "every man" should be "slow to wrath."
Not covetous (aphilargyros).	Heb. 13:5 -All Christians are to let their conduct be "aphilargyros."	Not given to wine.	See above.
One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection	Ephesians 5:22-6:4 shows that God would have every household ruled well by the husband/father, and all children in subjection.	No striker.	See above.
With all gravity (semnotes).	1 Tim. 2:2 - We are to pray for authorities so that we might live our lives with "semnotes." Titus 2:7 - Titus is to be an example to all of "semnotes."	Not given to filthy lucre.	See above.
Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil.	We are all new converts at some point, but we should all strive to progress beyond that point. Furthermore, "typhoo" (translated "lifted up with pride") is used elsewhere (1 Tim. 6:4, 2 Tim. 3:4) to describe rebellious and evil men. All Christians should avoid being lifted up with pride.	A lover of hospitality.	See above.
A good report of them which are without.	1 Peter 2:11-12 shows that all Christians should have a good reputation among unbelievers so that God may be glorified.	A lover of good men (philagathos).	All Christians are to love one another (1 John 4:7) and to love God (Luke 10:27) and all of the good that comes from him.
		Sober.	See above.
		Just (dikaios).	Romans 1:17 - The "dikaios" shall live by faith. 1 Peter 3:12 - Those who are "dikaios" are contrasted with those that do evil, showing that only the "dikaios" are protected and supported by the LORD.
		Holy (hosios).	Heb. 7:26 - Jesus is "hosios" and all Christians are to emulate Christ (1 John 2:6).
		Temperate (egkrates).	The sense conveyed by this word is one of discipline and mastery over one's own body. Various passages prescribe self-discipline for all Christians (Galatians 5:22-23, Titus 2:11-12).
		Holding fast the faithful word.	Paul commands Timothy to "hold fast the form of sound

words” that Paul had given him in 2 Tim. 1:13. All Christians are to hold fast to our confession (Heb. 10:23) and to continue in and be established in the faith that was originally taught by the apostles (Col. 1:23, Col. 2:6-7).

It is beyond question that unqualified men must not be appointed. However, we should not passively sit and wait for qualified men to appear. Every Christian man should be working to develop each of the attributes required of an elder at any given stage of his life. Anything less would be unworthy of someone who is trying to emulate Christ.

It is worthwhile to momentarily examine the qualification of “apt to teach” more closely. Many young men have no desire to teach, so this qualification essentially turns them away from pursuing the eldership. Those men in this position frequently reference James 3:1, where James said “My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation.” (KJV). To deny the truth of James’s teaching would be equivalent to denying God, but James 3: 1 should not be so misinterpreted as to discourage men from becoming the most valuable servants of the LORD they can be. We are all to teach in some sense. We are to teach our families, our friends, and our neighbors. We are to teach the whole world by our example. Paul uses the same Greek term translated “apt to teach” in 1 Timothy 3:2 to apply to the servant of the LORD in 2 Timothy 2:24. James 3:1 is illustrative of the seriousness of that role, showing it is necessary that only those who are capable should teach from the pulpit, but all Christians should work to become as capable as they can be in teaching. May no man use James 3:1 to excuse a lack of spirituality and dedication to growth and the study of God’s word.

To conclude, there is no higher office in the land than the eldership. It is the most important and rewarding work that is available to Christian men. The qualifications are strict, but attainable to those who will dedicate themselves wholly to God. Truthfully, all who strive to emulate Christ should expect to meet most or all of the qualifications, and those who want to serve the LORD as far as they are able will find no better way than as a shepherd of his flock. Who should desire the office of an elder? Every Christian man.

Reference: New World Encyclopedia: James Garfield. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/James_Garfield.

I AM NOT ASHAMED....continued from page one

Scott holds up three fingers and says, “The Gospel consists of three parts. There are facts to be believed, commands to be obeyed, and promises to be received.”

He holds up three fingers again and continues, “There are three facts to be believed the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. There are also three commands to be obeyed-belief, repentance, and baptism (Scott omits confession, but corrects it later and refers to Peter’s confession in Mt. 16:16 as the “Golden Oracle”), and there are three promises to be enjoyed-remission of sins, gift of the Holy Spirit, and the promise of heaven” (1 Jn. 2:25).

The boy is excited and runs home and tells his mother, “I just met a Gospel preacher and there is going to be Gospel preaching at the schoolhouse tonight!”

The mother exclaims, “What’s a Gospel preacher?”

The boy holds up three fingers and tries to explain, “Well, the Gospel has three parts ... and then there are three ... and there are three more ... “ Finally, in frustration the boy gasps, “I think a Gospel preacher is a guy who talks on his fingers!”

This simple three-finger mnemonic aid outlines the most wonderful story ever told and the most powerful truths ever revealed. The outline might be simple, but the concepts are earthshaking, for here is the heart of God’s power to salvation.

Some brethren make a sharp distinction between Gospel and doctrine. They contend the Gospel should be preached to the unsaved and doctrine should be taught to the saved-that elders are to take up where preachers leave off and teach doctrine to the saved. The view is used to prove that anyone who has obeyed the Gospel is safe spiritually regardless of the doctrinal error that he may follow after his conversion. They contend this is the only way we can achieve Christian unity.

Verse 15 gives them trouble, however. Paul says to the brethren at Rome, “I am ready to preach the gospel to YOU that are at Rome also.” The letter is addressed to “all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be SAINTS...” (1:7). So, Paul was going to preach the Gospel to the saved in Rome and he includes in this letter over a dozen different doctrinal issues under that general heading. Obviously, the Gospel contains the

good news concerning DBR and glorification of Christ, but it also in a general way refers to ANY good news from the Lord that regulates earthly conduct and directs one's life toward heaven.

The Gospel Paul preaches is also the "power of God unto salvation" (ver. 16). The word "power" is from the same word from which we get the English word "dynamite." One commentator says we should not associate the word with dynamite because dynamite is destructive and the Gospel is not. However, it is God's dynamite to blast sin, tradition, paganism and helplessness out of the hearts of men. Some hearts are like marble and the dynamite of the Gospel is the only thing that can penetrate.

The Gospel has the power to tum the world upside down (Acts 17:6). It not only has the power of forgiveness, but it has the power of remaking individuals. Multiplied thousands of people have been changed by responding to the story of God's love (cf. 2 Cor. 5:17). One man's life was so altered that one of his employees remarked, "He is not the same man! It's the same skin, but there's a new man inside!"

Such power is the reason Paul was not ashamed of the Gospel, and the reason he was eager to preach it to the Romans also.

Some people are ashamed of the Gospel however. Thirty years ago, well-known denominational preacher John MacArthur wrote a book titled Ashamed of the Gospel. The book is an expose on his own evangelical fellowship. He laments that attendance figures have become the sole criterion for determining success for any church and the Gospel is no longer viewed as an effective means of drawing a large crowd. Therefore, whatever brings in the biggest crowd is acceptable. He observes they have essentially traded Gospel for entertainment and today anything goes.

The fact remains, however, that regardless of what attracts people to the church building, no one is going to be saved until we preach the GOSPEL and they OBEY it!

Is it possible we are ashamed of the Gospel? Most would never admit it, but are we embarrassed to tell our friends about our faith in Christ? Are we ashamed of the plan of salvation, a cappella singing, or the communion? Are we afraid to speak out in midst of our pagan culture?

Jesus says, "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him

the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels" (Mk. 8:38).

We need a new, soul-refreshing conviction of the power of the Gospel of Christ and a new sense of urgency about preaching it to others. It is the same Gospel Paul believed, preached, and died for. We have the same reasons he had for not being ashamed of it and for chomping at the bit to tell it to others. carlmj@ cableone.net

THINK ON THESE...continued from page two

use of saws were indeed used in Old Testament times as punishment. Tradition asserts, though it is not in the Bible, that Isaiah was sawn in half by a wooden saw. Whether or not he was, it is certain that some were.

As we look back in horror at the persecution the ancient worthies suffered, it does cause us to be sober. It undoubtedly also had the same effect on Israel. However, even in our "modern" times those who went before us sometimes had it pretty hard. No, they weren't put to death. They didn't have to wear sheepskins, etc., but their lives were difficult sometimes, and they too were heroes. They were not always seen as heroes, but looking back they certainly were. The old-time preachers did without many modern comforts we enjoy and take for granted today. Their lives were lived amid spartan surroundings. Transportation was simple and often difficult. Cars were not airconditioned, luxurious, nor as dependable as they are now. Travel was slow and sometimes uncomfortable. Money was scarce because most of our brethren were poor and could not afford to support preachers as well as they do now. Many lived in simple houses, sometimes with no electricity, and often with no indoor plumbing or piped in water. My knowledge of this is by experience. Cooking was done on wood fired stoves and the fare was pretty simple. I was born in 1942 and traveled with my parents every summer in gospel meetings. It was necessary for me to attend a number of different schools due to our moving pretty often. It was common for my father to hold meetings for \$50 (I have his records,) but he and others went year after year preaching and baptizing throughout the United States. Many young men so admired the old preachers that they also wanted to preach. Apparently, they saw the preachers as heroes and desired to join ranks with them. Brother Wayne Fussell told me that when he began preaching there were about 40 who also began about the same time. The 4th of July meetings were occasions of great joy as brethren were able to see

those of like-precious-faith from afar, and hear those preachers they loved and admired. They looked forward to being there all year long. Just to see the crowd was amazing. Brethren commonly embraced each other because they truly loved one another. Many spent every afternoon together in the Platt National Park (where it was cooler) visiting and singing out of the new songbook published every year by Homer L. King. The Sulphur meeting was often called “the camp meeting,” because it was a time when many literally camped out in order to hear those old preachers declare the truth. Few had money to speak of but they all enjoyed being there. They sacrificed greatly in order to be there for the meeting. Some borrowed money to make the trip, and sisters would sew clothes for months beforehand. A gospel meeting was the biggest thing they saw all year, and to be able to actually attend the biggest brotherhood meeting of the whole year was a special treat! No, our brethren were not wealthy then but spiritually they were very much alive and well.

I have given this brief mention as a means of encouragement for us today. As President Ronald Reagan once said, “If we forget what we did, we won’t know who we are.” Take stock brethren: are you spiritually better off today than you were when you were much younger? Do you look forward to attending a meeting all year? What about the congregation where you worship? Do the brethren look forward to meetings, reading their Bibles, discussing Bible things with others? Do you see brethren eagerly participating in learning new songs to sing praises to God, and attending all the services faithfully? Do they look forward to hearing the gospel preached firmly and without apology? If we took our spiritual temperature today, are we cold, hot, or lukewarm? (Revelations 3:15)

Think on these things. DLK

Field Reports

Don L. King, 1147 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA 94550, old_paths@juno.com, July 12. Since last report, our situation remains little changed as far as the Covid 19 problem is concerned. Things are still partially closed down although some restaurants are serving customers outside. However, that is being reviewed at this time. There is talk of it going back to a shut down condition. This virus is a real problem. Most meetings have been canceled in our area but congregations seem to be able to meet on Sunday. Our congregation is meeting

regularly with no interference thus far. We’re thankful for that. It is likely that I will begin preaching some at Stockton again as soon as things ease some. Like most of you, we miss things as they once were and pray for them to return to normal soon. Meanwhile, preachers, we need your materials for publication in Old Paths Advocate. Please get them to me by the 12th of the month if possible. We continue to receive renewals and new subscriptions for the paper and hope you will continue. Your reports as to the condition of things in your area would be of value, brethren.

Paul O. Nichols, 14217 Rosehill, Overland Park, KS 66221, pon.wjn.ks@juno.com, July 3. The congregation at Stony Point continues to remain faithful in our service to the Lord. We are thankful that none of the members have suffered from the virus which has plagued the world. We have continued to serve the Lord, and have not forsaken a single Lord’s day for fear of the disease. We have our legal distances marked off with tape and use plenty of disinfectant available the instant we enter the building, and we refrain from shaking hands. One of the members keeps us informed concerning the local restrictions so that we are not in total ignorance of the mandates of the authorities. The attendance is within the limits of the number that is legal, and so far we have been blessed with no interference from anyone. We are thankful, and sympathize with our fellow Christians who have gotten the disease, and others who have been threatened for the faithfulness to the Lord. Right now our faith is being tested, and I am sure that when things return to normal there will be regrets by those who for fear, made some wrong decisions. But we must be considerate and forgiving, knowing that brethren want to do what is right and scriptural. May the Lord be with us all as we strive to do His will under very trying circumstances.

Rick Martin, teacherrmartin@gmail.com. Greetings to all. It is my prayer that all is well with the Lord’s people everywhere. As far as our situation in Marietta is concerned, we are thankful, all is well. We have had no problems with any authorities. Our governor was one of the first to open things back up. We just closed a weekend meeting with Bruce Roebuck and heard some great preaching. We are thankful for Bruce and his efforts. Some of the other congregations in our area are still planning on having their meetings, so we look forward to attending, Lord willing. We are still receiving inquiries about the TV program with Kevin Presley and have several enrolled in the correspondence course. May the Lord bless His people everywhere.

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WALKS THROUGH THE BIBLE...

DO NOT JUDGE...BUT JUDGE!

By JERRY DICKINSON

“Did not Moses give you the law, yet none of you keeps the law? Why do you seek to kill Me?” The people answered and said, ‘You have a demon. Who is seeking to kill You?’ Jesus answered and said to them, “I did one work, and you all marvel. Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment.” (John 7:19-21; 24) Jesus does not give an absolute prohibition against judging, but declares our judgments must meet certain criteria. Many quote the Lord in Matthew 7: 1 where he proclaimed, “ Judge not, that you be not judged,” as if that were an absolute prohibition against any and all kinds of judging; however, even the context there shows Jesus is demanding that we judge righteously and fairly, knowing that as we judge we will be judged.

In the passage quoted above in John 7 the chief priests and Pharisees were seeking to kill Jesus. They have been plotting against him for 2 years! In John 5 Jesus healed a paralyzed man at the Pool of Bethesda on the Sabbath day and in the ensuing controversy He called God His Father enraging the Jewish leaders. The events in John 7 take place 2 years later and they are still mad! Notice Jesus said, I did one work and you seek to kill me, referring back to the healing two years before! Jesus goes on to explain that they neither understand nor keep the law and yet they are judging Him as a lawbreaker. In that context he declares, “Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment.” He does not say it is wrong to judge, but that we must not judge superficially, not knowing all the facts and without a correct understanding of the Scriptures. We must judge accurately and righteously. We must use the correct criteria for judging. What an important and vital truth. It is a serious matter to set yourself up as a judge of another person, especially another child of God! Make sure you are judging righteously. Make sure you follow the correct criteria. Note with me some criteria we must use in judging.

AM I QUALIFIED? Some are absolutely not qualified to judge other people. In fact, this is precisely the point Jesus is making in Matthew 7. He says that with what judgment we judge we will be judged. Then the Lord uses hyperbole in the illustration of a man trying to remove a speck from his brother’s eye while he has a plank in his own eye. “Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.” If I am a hypocrite I am not qualified to be a judge. Introspection needs to come before inspection! Those who live in glass houses shouldn’t throw rocks. I need to make sure I am what I should be before judging others is what the Lord is teaching. The word of God is a sharp sword that can be used to cut and heal, but in the wrong hands it can be used to cut and kill. It takes wisdom to know how to use the scriptures correctly and to judge others righteously. Some do not have the wisdom and expertise to judge and the result is great harm to individuals and the church. Before you start judging others make a careful introspection of your life, your motives, and your qualifications. Are you qualified to be a judge of other Christians?

DO I HAVE ALL THE FACTS? Jesus, really, was telling the chief priests and Pharisees that they did not understand the Sabbath law. They thought they were experts but were woefully ignorant. Make sure you know what you are talking about when you judge someone. Jesus appeared to Ananias and told him to go tell Saul of Tarsus what he needed to do to have his sins washed away, but Ananias protested. He told the Lord that he had heard all about this man and he had come to arrest disciples. The problem was that Ananias didn’t have all the facts! Jesus informs Ananias that Saul is a chosen vessel. Ananias thought he had Saul figured out but he did not have all the facts. Sometimes we think we have people all figured out. We know their motives, what they are thinking, and what they believe in their hearts, however, if we knew all the facts our harsh and hasty judgments would (or should) be different. Interestingly, when the rulers met to consider what to do with Jesus, Nicodemus charged them with judging Jesus without hearing him. Due process demands that we hear a man and get all the facts before judging him. “Nicodemus said to them, ‘Does our law judge a man before it hears him and knows what he is doing?’ (John 7:50, 51)

DARE I JUDGE ANOTHER’S CONSCIENCE? “Who are you to judge another’s servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Therefore, let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother’s way. Therefore, let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which we may edify one another.” (Romans 14:4, 13, 19) Let us remember that in Romans 14 Paul is writing about things that do not affect salvation. He is not talking about the plan of salvation or scriptural worship, but matters of opinion and conscience. We can be wrong on some points and still go to heaven! These are matters of indifference, that is, they do not affect our salvation, and Paul avers they should not affect Christian fellowship. I knew an old brother years ago who believed it was wrong to have a baptistery in the church because he believed you must be baptized in running water. He was wrong and I discussed it with him but his conscience was firm. What should I do with such a brother? Withdraw from him? Castigate him? Reject him? Paul says I am to accept him and not judge his conscience. I have no right, Paul affirms, to judge another man’s servant (he is the Lord’s servant after all, not mine) when it involves matters of indifference and opinion. I certainly dare not judge a brother’s heart and conscience. Woe is me if I do, and Jesus says the way I judge others is the way I will be judged of others. Most importantly God will judge me as I judge others, and I want the Lord to judge me with righteous judgment on the great Day. Most of all I want grace and mercy when I stand before Him. Help me O Lord, yea, help us all to “Judge not according to appearance, but with righteous judgment.”