

Standing Alone

"At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge." (2 Tim. 4:16) **By Edward O. Bragwell** between personality and principle. One need not feel obligated to support a brother in a purely personal dispute. In such matters both parties are usually wrong One cannot afford to be a party to such partisanship.

In the battle for right, one should stand alone if necessary. But it should not be necessary. Paul recalls his encounter with the coppersmith. He relates, without bitterness, how he was left to fight the battle alone. Yet, he was not really alone. The Lord stood with him. (v. 17) How discouraging the absence of the brethren must have been. But, how encouraging was the fact that the Lord stood with him!

Standing for truth is bound to produce enemies. Jesus said so much: "Think not that I am come to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household." (Mt. 10:34-36)

Standing for the truth should produce friends as well. We should openly stand for Christ. A Christian cannot help being encouraged by knowing that he has the support of good brethren in his spiritual warfare. If I had to stand alone, as Paul did, I wonder how strong I would be. I pray I shall not have to be put to the test. The moral support of good brethren in the Lord's work is priceless.

Before taking a stand with any person, one should distinguish

However, principles are held and advanced by persons. Ideas are not just loose in the air they are in people. Doctrines are not promoted by things they are taught and defended by personalities. It is too easy to dismiss every dispute in religion as a "personality clash" between the disputants. It avoids the effort of determining who, if anyone, is right. It avoids having to make the painful decision to stand with those who are right. It may be the easy way out, but is it the right way?

People often privately admire those who take a firm stand for truth. They may even say so privately. Yet, if it comes to open identification with those people, then forget it! It might cost too much in worldly friendships.

Let us learn not to stand with any person above principle. That is cheap partisanship. But let us not be afraid to be identified with persons of principle. They should not have to stand alone - even if they are willing to.



Classes this Week:

Sunday 5:15 Kid's Class at the Building	Mon 7 PM Ladies' Class at Paula Davis	Mon 7 PM Men's Class at the Davis'	Thur 7 PM 1 Jn Study at Jillian Petty's	Fri 6-8 PM 1st-8th Grade at the Robert's
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Sick

Fran Snyder (Mother of Carla Humphrey)	Lori Holloway	Chick Wade
Gloria Detmer and Carol Dickerson (Toni Herd's Sisters)	Carrie Chavers (Friend of Sharon Bailey)	Jared Nixon
Ross Folmar	Grandparents of Mary Ann Roberts	Joe Perry (Anna Miller's Relative)
Ed Mort (Friend of Sharon Bailey)	Kenn and Ellen Smith (Ken Sullivan's Parents)	Erlene Davis (Walker Davis' mother)
Gerald White (Christopher's and Wesley's Father)	Dave Brown (Friend of the Lanier's)	Bill Rhodes (Toni Herd's Uncle)
Marty and Aubrey Meeks (Toni Herd's Nephews)	Frank Johnson (Debbi Coleman's Uncle)	Herbert Missildine (Toni Herd's Uncle)
Christi Gibson (Fallon Hartsell's Mother)	Mike Reed (Friend of the Long's)	Daphene Whatley (Lisa Lanier's Mom)

October Birthdays

- 1 - Micah Mauldin
- 2 - Suzanne Nichols
- 6 - Jessica Anderson
- 8 - Heath Fowler
- 11 - Mason Chandler
- 12 - Stacy Norman
- 14 - Lauren Drake
- 20 - Keith Bailey
- 21 - Scott Shields
- 22 - Hunter Crawford
- 22 - Chris Davis
- 22 - Christopher White
- 25 - Josh Sutton
- 26 - Sarah Sutton
- 26 - Palmer Daniels
- 26 - Mel Ambrose
- 29 - Belle Johnson
- 29 - Matt Hall
- 31 - Kitty Tam

News and Notes

☑ Let's remember our expectant mothers: BJ Winslett, Joy Liu, Amanda Stephens and Nicole Pender.

☑ We will have our monthly Men's business meeting today at 3 PM. We will be having our first annual discussion of our work together with our evangelist.

☑ Please be sure to greet our visitors and encourage them to fill out a visitors card.

☑ If you have any Bible question or would be interested in a home Bible study please let one of our members know.

☑ After every service Audio CDs will be available in the foyer. Please take them and give them to others!

The Auburn Beacon



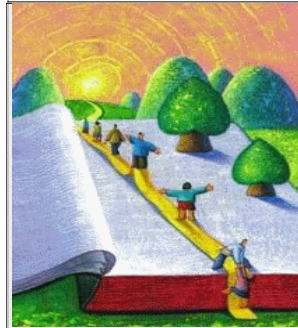
Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:16)

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A People of Refuge

By Larry Rouse



Thought to Ponder

No one ever graduates from Bible study until he meets the author face to face.

Do You Have a Bible Question?
Call (334) 734-2133 or E-mail: LarryRouse@aubeacon.com

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES Sunday

Bible Class9:30 AM
Worship10:20 AM
Evening Worship 6:00 PM

Wednesday

Bible Classes.....7:00 PM

Ask about our home Bible Study Groups!

Larry Rouse
Evangelist and Editor

The identifying characteristic of God's people is their love for and their involvement with one another. These identifying marks of the church of Christ are not merely outward beliefs or outward practices found only in our assemblies, but they are, in fact, shown by our willingness to lift up and care for others whenever their time of need arises. "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:34-35). It is no surprise that Jesus described the separation of the saved from the lost at the judgment day as being determined by service rendered or in service that was ignored to others in their time of need (Mt 25:44-46).

Make no mistake that every child of God must be determined to do "all things" the Lord has commanded (Mt 28:20). Still it is the human side of God's commands, the willingness to sacrifice our time, our effort and our money to be intimately involved with others of vastly different backgrounds, that provides the greatest evidence of our faith in God. In order for us to help another, we must first empty ourselves just as our Lord did when He came to earth (Phil 2:1-8).

Everyone who comes to God understands their need of refuge. Our God

God wants to provide, but He will only do so for those who look for Him. "But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. (Hebrews 11:6)"

provides a refuge, not one in a physical place, but in a spiritual place, a place that He describes as His church. When one is baptized in water he is then added by God to a spiritual family described as the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:13). Our primary care comes directly from God through His written revelation, His daily provisions and through the lives of those who were also washed in the blood of Christ. We come to God broken in our sin, rejected by the world and completely empty of any good that would obligate God to us (Matt 5:1-8). It is at this point where God begins rebuilding our lives, and a major tool that He uses in that process is the local church.

The Reality of the World

In this world we will find rejection, exploi-

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tation and slander. King David once cried out to God for refuge in a world that wanted to see him destroyed. "Have mercy on me, O LORD, for I am in trouble; My eye wastes away with grief, Yes, my soul and my body! For my life is spent with grief, And my years with sighing; My strength fails because of my iniquity, And my bones waste away. I am a reproach among all my enemies, But especially among my neighbors, And am repulsive to my acquaintances; Those who see me outside flee from me. {12} I am forgotten like a dead man, out of mind; I am like a broken vessel. For I hear the slander of many; Fear is on every side; While they take counsel together against me, They scheme to take away my life. (Psalms 31:9-13)"

God responded to David's call for help by providing such a refuge with Himself and with His people. "Oh, how great is Your goodness, Which You have laid up for those who fear You, Which You have prepared for those who trust in You In the presence of the sons of men! You shall hide them in the secret place of Your presence From the plots of man; You shall keep them secretly in a pavilion From the strife of tongues. Blessed be the LORD, For He has shown me His marvelous kindness in a strong city! For I said in my haste, "I am cut off from before Your eyes"; Nevertheless You heard the voice of my supplications When I cried out to You. Oh, love the LORD, all you His saints! For the LORD preserves the faithful, And fully repays the proud person. Be of good courage, And He shall strengthen your heart, All you who hope in the LORD. (Psalms 31:19-24)"

In the New Testament God describes how His people both receive help and give help to those who are weak and wounded. "Therefore strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be *dislocated*, but rather be healed. (Hebrews 12:12-13)" What a comfort to find others willing to selflessly extend their hands to assist in my time of need!

Consider the needs of any man that comes to God for refuge.

The Truth about Sin

Jesus pleaded with men to understand the bad news about sin so that they might receive the good news. Any "comfort" that comes without first dealing with the issue of sin is a shallow and empty comfort.

Sadly many churches of men have rejected the Bible as being inspired, and as a result, will never address the subject of sin as our Lord did. "Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am *He*, you will die in your sins. (John 8:24)"

The Forgiveness of Sin

Peter instructed those who never knew the Lord to repent and be baptized for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:37-38). Christians were instructed by Peter to repent and pray to God so that "the thought of your heart may be forgiven you. (Acts 8:22)" What a comfort to find the entire, enormous burden of your sin lifted!

A People to Share and to Stand With

The power of a local church is found in our knowledge of our own forgiveness. Those who fail to grow in the Lord were described by Peter: "For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins. (2 Peter 1:9)" Because of this, Christians above all people, will show mercy and be quick to receive and comfort all who repent and turn to the Lord. It is this forgiveness that we have in common and that makes this relationship so rich! We may be laughed at and ridiculed by the world, for the world does not understand the basis of our lives or of our companionship (Heb 10:32-35).

A People that Help Him to Remember and Renew His Faith

The people of God have assemblies for this very purpose. "Let us hold fast the confession of *our* hope without wavering, for He who promised *is* faithful. ²⁴And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, ²⁵not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as *is* the manner of some, but exhorting *one another*, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching. (Hebrews 10:23-25)" In addition to these assemblies, the bulk of this encouragement is found in a day-to-day involvement with Christians in our homes and in our lives (Acts 2:46-47).

Have You Found this Refuge?

This refuge will not be found in the wisdom of men nor in their churches. This refuge will come when you find and claim the written promises of God and stand with others who do the same. God wants to provide, but He will only do so for those who look for Him. "But without faith *it is* impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. (Hebrews 11:6)"



The Prudent Pause

By Tim Nichols

We live in a time in which restraint and self-discipline are not widely considered to be virtues. Impulse guides behavior more than reason. The gap between the impulse and the resulting action is sometimes so small that, to many, it seems not to exist. Many seem to be willing to pronounce any act justified if the impulse that prompted it is in any way justified.

But we are accountable to God for our actions whether the world recognizes our accountability or does not. When tempted to do a thing that is wrong we are equipped with the God-given ability to pause and think before acting. What happens during that pause may have eternal consequences. The Philadelphia Youth Study Center used to have this slogan: "The difference between the delinquent and the non-delinquent youth is the pause between the temptation and the act." The slogan is just as true if we delete the word "youth".

As we pause in the midst of temptation we ought to remind ourselves that we do not usually have to act swiftly. We sometimes make rash decisions rather than allow ourselves to choose our actions or words slowly and deliberately (Proverbs 6:18; Romans 3:15; James 1:19). Slow down. Widen the gap between the impulse and the action.

Take the time to think about the earthly consequences of your actions. How will your actions affect your family, the church, your friends, or your own reputation? Do you want

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to live with those consequences?

Take the time to consider all of your options. Under pressure we sometimes develop "tunnel vision". We see only one course of action when, in fact, there are many options available to us. Look for them. At least one of your options will always be morally right (1 Corinthians 10:13).

Take the time to consider the eternal consequences (Revelation 21:8). The fear motive may not be the "highest" motive in the rating system that some brethren use, but we ought to be grateful that God has revealed both his goodness and his severity (Romans 11:22). If a knowledge of God's wrath helps us to gain one ounce of resolve to do right and avoid evil, then we ought to be pleased to have such knowledge.

Take the time to contemplate the goodness of God. He is the source of every good gift (James 1:17). He loved you enough to give his son that you might have eternal life (John 3:16). Pause to think of the debt of gratitude that you owe.

Pause to consider God's word. It contains divine guidance that can keep you from evil (Psalm 119:9-16). Sometimes in the midst of temptation, when tempers or passions are hottest, we search the Word of God less when we need it most. It is during such times that we would do well to heed the words of our heavenly father who said, "Be still, and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10).

