

Why Don't We Seek?

Why don't we seek God more diligently than we do? If we are willing to acknowledge that God is our ultimate need, why is it so hard to do what we should about that need? For most of us, there is an obvious need for greater motivation.

By Gary Henry

"Therefore I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little" (v.47). If our seeking of the Lord is lukewarm, it is because we don't see that we have anything very serious to be forgiven. A passionate pursuit of God is only generated when we face the horror of our destiny without His grace.

To be frank, the problem comes down to a single word: *self-righteousness*. The failure to seek Him diligently comes from a refusal to see the hideous ugliness of our own sins against God, sins that will condemn us forever if we don't devoutly throw ourselves upon His mercy. "In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:10). We wouldn't have any trouble living our love for God if we understood how fortunate we are to be loved by Him! Godly zeal is the product of gratitude.

This principle is illustrated poignantly in **Luke 7:36-50**. There Jesus rebuked the self-righteous ingratitude of Simon, a Pharisee who had criticized a sinful woman who lovingly approached the Lord. Jesus pointed out that she loved Him more than Simon because she was more conscious of the sins she needed to have forgiven.

The most powerful motive force in the world is a deeply felt appreciation for the forgiveness God mercifully makes available to us in His Son. We will truly love God only when we see something of the price He has paid to love us. "For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again" (2 Corinthians 5:14,15). Having been stripped of our self-righteousness and made to grieve our emptiness, we will seek God with an earnestness that is eternal.



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The Auburn Beacon



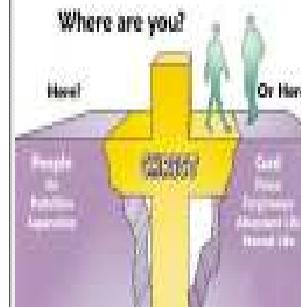
Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:16)

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Who Is Jesus of Nazareth?

By Paul Earnhart



Thoughts to Ponder

Everything Jesus ever said or did has value for us today and that is something you cannot say of any other man, dead or alive.

"Who say ye that I am?" is the question with which Jesus confronted the twelve at Caesarea Philippi. Men and women of our day are no less challenged to answer the same question, a question upon which hangs the very meaning of life itself. Who is this man whose influence has cast itself powerfully across nineteen centuries?

The only Jesus we may know is the one whose story is written in the New Testament by His close companions and disciples. This is the "historical Jesus." If we attack their simple, straightforward accounts as unreliable, we have burned the only bridge by which He may be known. We have also assumed the burden of proving what hoped-for reward could have moved these men who spoke so often of truth to enter into a gigantic hoax, and to sacrifice their lives rather than confess it. We must accept or reject the Jesus of the New Testament simply because there is no evidence or testimony for any other.

No mere man could make such claims as these unless He were mad or an arch-deceiver. If we reject Jesus as God's Son we are compelled to place Him in one of these categories. We are left to decide if we are willing to attribute to insanity or wicked deception the finest hour of human history.

The Christ of Prophecy

The best way to get an answer to the question, "Who is Jesus?" is to let Jesus speak for Himself. When the Samaritan woman assured Jesus that she knew when the Christ (Messiah) came He would declare all things, He replied, "I that speak unto thee am he" (John 4:25-26). To His disciples just before His ascension, He said, "These are my words which I spoke unto you, while I was with you, that all things must needs be fulfilled which are written in the law of Moses, and the prophets and the psalms concern-

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Classes This Week

Sunday 5:15 Kid's Class at the Building	Sunday 5:15 College Devo at Craig Davis' with David Tant	Monday 7 PM Ladies' Class at the Pender's	Friday 6-8 PM 1st-8th Grade Class at the Jerkin's
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Sick

Fran Snyder (Mother of Carla Humphrey)	Lori Holloway	Chick Wade	Sandlyn Fultz (Davis Fultz's Sister)
Gloria Detmer and Carol Dickerson (Toni Herd's Sisters)	Carrie Chavers (Friend of Sharon Bailey)	Jared Nixon	Philip Locke (Jeremiah Johnson's Uncle)
Lee Steptoe (William Herd's cousin)	Grandparents of Mary Ann Roberts	Joe Perry (Anna Miller's Relative)	Jerry Sandlin (Megan Lee's Grandfather)
Jo Faust Williams (Manna Jones' friend)	Quinton Addison (April Jerkins Grandfather)	Erlene Davis (Walker Davis' mother)	Mary Smith (Nathan Smith's Grandmother)
Gerald White (Christopher's and Wesley's Father)	Dave Brown (Friend of the Lanier's)	Dale Herd (William Herd's Uncle)	Larry Alexander (Friend of Phillip Box)
Marty and Aubrey Meeks (Toni Herd's Nephews)	Frank Johnson (Debbi Coleman's Uncle)	Dale Wilkes (William Herd's Uncle)	Easton Alexander (Phillip Box's cousin's baby)

May Birthdays

- 1 - Barrett Gilbert
- 2 - Emily-Anne Rouse
- 3 - Paula Davis
- 9 - Andrea Cason
- 10 - Ian Norman
- 11 - Caleb George
- 13 - Janna Hall
- 13 - Anna Grace Long
- 15 - Bryce Daniels
- 15 - Kerri Pender
- 16 - Shawna Harris
- 24 - Andy Roberts
- 26 - Fallon Hartsell
- 28 - Candy Long
- 29 - Rebekah Buchanon

News and Notes

- Paul Tam was baptized into Christ last Sunday afternoon! Let us rejoice with our new brother in Christ.
- Seth Humprey's uncle, Richard Call, has been diagnosed with lung cancer.
- Chris Davis continues to undergo tests on his lengthy illness.
- Let us remember our expectant mothers: Anne Morton and Jana Hall.
- Let us remember Matthew Johnson, David Golden and Tim Morton in our prayers as they are deployed overseas.
- Larry is preaching away today.
- David Tant will be with us tonight to complete his series. He will also speak at the college devotional.
- Gardner Hall will be at Perry Hill Road may 15-20 in a meeting.
- Let us pray for those who are suffering from the tornadoes. Rebekah Buchanon's parents lost their home. Also a brother, Marcus Smith, is still missing in Tuscaloosa.

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

Check Us Out On the Internet: www.aubeacon.com

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ing me . . . Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again the third day" (**Luke 24:44,46**). Whatever we may think of it, Jesus clearly claimed to be the promised Christ of all the Old Testament prophecies.

Several hundred years before the birth of Jesus, Isaiah declared that the Christ would be descended from Jesse and David (**11:1-9; 9:6-7; John 7:42**) and be born of a virgin (**7:14; Matthew 1:18-23**). At the same time the prophet Micah spoke of Bethlehem as His birthplace (**5:2; Matthew 2:3-6**). Yet, in spite of His human birth, Isaiah spoke of Him as "the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father" (**9:6-7**); and Micah said His goings forth were "from everlasting" (**5:2**).

More than four hundred years before His conception the prophet Zechariah spoke of His entrance into Jerusalem riding on an ass (**9:9-10**). Isaiah chronicled His suffering and death for the sins of the world long before they occurred and spoke beforehand of His burial with a rich man (**53:1-9**). David revealed the details of the crucifixion fully one thousand years before it transpired (**Psalms 22:1-18**), and prophesied of the resurrection that would follow (**Psalms 16:9-10; Acts 2:25-32**). A scheming deceiver might have contrived to seemingly fulfill some of the Messianic prophecies, but, however shrewd, no man has control of the circumstances of his birth and death.

The Son of God

Jesus also made a clear claim to being, in a unique way, the Son of God. To Nicodemus He spoke of Himself as the "only-begotten Son of God" (**John 3:16**). He made the same clear assertion to a man he healed of life long blindness (**John 9:35-37**) and blessed Peter for declaring Him to be "the Christ, the Son of the living God" (**Matthew 16:15-17**). His other claims reflect His deity indirectly. He claimed

to be eternal (**John 8:58**), sinless (**John 8:46**), able to forgive sins (**Mark 2:5-10**) and give life to the dead (**John 5:21,28**).

No mere man could make such claims as these unless He were mad or an arch-deceiver. If we reject Jesus as God's Son we are compelled to place Him in one of these categories. We are left to decide if we are willing to attribute to insanity or wicked deception the finest hour of human history.

Jesus is also declared to be the Son of God by His resurrection from the dead (**Romans 1:4**). And the evidence for His resurrection is formidable. Both His friends and enemies agree on three facts: He died, was buried, and the tomb was empty. His enemies, unable to produce the body, bribed the sepulchre guards to tell the puerile story that "while we slept" His disciples came and stole the body away. Is it conceivable that men who ran away in fear while Jesus was alive would afterward risk their lives for possession of His corpse? There is only one explanation of the empty tomb which answers to all the facts and explains the testimony of the disciples and their transformation into a joyous, militant band of preachers. Clearly, as they said, He had risen from the dead and they had seen Him!

The Lord of lords

From His position as Christ and Son of God, Jesus claimed supreme power over every person and force in the universe (**Matthew 28:18; Ephesians 1:20-22**). Jesus also claimed that He was the very embodiment of truth and life and the only means of access to God (**John 14:6; Matthew 11:27**). It should be no surprise then that He demanded from all men a supreme and absolute loyalty (**Matthew 10:37-38**).

We would do well to ponder carefully the question, "Who is Jesus of Nazareth?" It is not the kind of question we can escape, and it sounds very much like our answer will determine our ultimate destiny (**John 8:24**).



You Can Count on Me

By Frank Himmel

Many a man proclaims his own loyalty, but who can find a trustworthy man?
Proverbs 20:6

Grandpa Walton used to say that when there is a difference between what a man says and what he does, he had learned to go with what the man does. Sadly, a gap (sometimes a sizeable one) between commitments made and commitments kept is all too frequent. "You can count on me...."

You can count on me to love, honor, and cherish. That is what we vow when we marry. That is what God requires (Ephesians 5:22-23), "until death do us part." The husband commits to a lifetime of self-sacrificing love, care, and provision for his family. The wife commits to a lifetime of love, respect, and submission to her husband. But alas, even among some Christians, "You can count on me" proves an idle boast. Self-centeredness, anger, dishonesty, laziness, and lust come to be the reliable traits. The importance of getting to know a prospective mate well, learning all you can about his/her spirituality and character, cannot be overemphasized.

You can count on me to do the job. That is what we say to the company that hires us. We are committing to consistent, quality work, "not with eye service... but with sincerity... heartily, as for the Lord" (**Colossians 3:22-24**). Yet today's employers say reliable workers are "scarce as hen's teeth." One man told me he often hires a crew of ten, hoping six or seven will show up. This is what we say to those who ask us when we agree to contact a visitor, teach a class, or so some work at the building. They are depending on us. Are we trustworthy?

You can count on me to pay the bill. That is what we say every time we make an extended purchase, whether signing a lease, ordering utilities, taking out a loan, or using a credit card. That creditor expects you to keep your word. So does God (**Matthew 5:37; Romans 13:8**).

You can count on me to pay the bill. That is what we say every time we make an extended purchase, whether signing a lease, ordering utilities, taking out a loan, or using a credit card. That creditor expects you to keep your word. So does God (**Matthew 5:37; Romans 13:8**). If you do not have the means to pay, you have no business making the commitment. Bankruptcies and defaults in our society are

at an all time high. Do not be deceived into viewing that as anything except what it is -- a shortage of trustworthy people.

You can count on me to keep the appointment. That is what we say when we agree to meet another at a given place and time. Not to show up is a personal affront. Tardiness is inexcusable. It is an irksome habit, born of inconsideration and is easily preventable. Some of us are continuously late for the services of the Lord even though they have always been held at the same time. This is not only inconsiderate and disruptive to those who have arrived on time, it is inconsiderate to the Lord.

You can count on me to live as befits a disciple of Christ. Isn't that what we say to the Lord when we are baptized into Him, when we are appealing for the forgiveness only He can provide (**1 Peter 3:21**)? **Doing the Father's will is what He requires, not empty claims of devotion** (**Matthew 7:21-23**). **That is the standard by which we will be judged. Conduct yourselves in a manner worth of the gospel of Christ** (**Philippians 1:27**). **Be faithful until death** (**Revelation 2:10**).

