

Deflected Scriptures and Ricochet Sermons

At the end of a sermon, how often have you said out loud or to yourself, "There are a lot of people here who could use that sermon." Or, "I hope brother _____ was paying attention to that." Or, "I wish sister _____ had been here to hear that lesson." For most of us, it's easy to see how the Scriptures apply to others, but it's not as easy to understand how they apply to us as individuals. This was one of the main shortcomings of the Pharisees. Jesus said of them, "For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers" (**Matthew 23:4**).

I've heard old time preachers talk about preaching ricochet sermons. They would preach a lesson aimed at convicting a particular individual, only to have that individual remain entirely unaffected, but someone else in the congregation would holler and complain about how that sermon had been aimed right at them. Apparently, the lesson bounced off one person and hit someone else! A ricochet sermon!

A bullet won't ricochet off butter. It has to hit something hard. That's true of God's word too. When hearts and minds are hard, even God's word cannot penetrate. The person who rejects and deflects the

By Steve Klein

Scriptures will not be changed by them and cannot be helped by them. The seed that falls on the hard wayside soil can't penetrate, so it doesn't germinate, and it never has a chance to bear fruit (**cf. Matthew 13:18-19**). In those whose hardened hearts deflect God's word, "the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says: 'Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, and seeing you will see and not perceive; for the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, So that I should heal them'" (**Matthew 13:14-15**).

My friend, the truth of God's word is for you. It applies to you. It will help you. Receive it and examine yourself to see how. "Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion" (**Hebrews 3:15**).



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|------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| Brad Marshall (Allie Hosey's Cousin) | Owen Mauldin (Seth and Summer Mauldin's Son) | Frank Hand (Laura Humphrey's dad) | Sandlyn Fultz (Davis Fultz's Sister) |
| Gloria Detmer and Carol Dickerson (Toni Herd's Sisters) | Don Lanier (Father of Greg Lanier) | David Hartsell (Holly and Brad's Father) | Kate Miller (Daughter of Brandon and Erin Miller) |
| Betty Mcareavey (Mary Ann Roberts' mom) | Kevin Simpson | Mark Dean (Father of Logan Dean) | Jerry Foropoulos (Anna Jean's Uncle) |
| Tom Davis (Walker Davis' Uncle) | Quinton Addison (April Jerkins Grandfather) | Danny Weldon (Rusty Weldon's brother) | Yolanda Stewart (Michael Bassie's Sister) |
| Gerald White (Christopher, Anna and Wesley's Father) | Austin Locke (Jeremiah Johnson's Grandfather) | Rebecca Davis (Chuck Hahn's Niece) | Camden, grandson of Steve Pruitt (friend of Greg Lanier) |
| John M. Rhodes and Bonnie Rhodes Kirkley (Toni Herd's family) | Joe Perkins (Scott Perkins' Dad) | Aubrey Meeks (Toni Herd's Nephew) | Johnny Richardson |

May Birthdays

- 1-Bethany Marchan
- 2-Taylor Bethea
- 2-Emily-Anne Rouse
- 3-Paula Davis
- 10-Ian Norman
- 10-Ryan Hasty
- 11-Scott Perkins
- 12-Daphene Whatley
- 12-Patrick Davis
- 13-Anna Grace Long
- 13-Jana Hall
- 13-Peyton Vines
- 15-Bryce Daniels
- 18-Ty Randolph
- 19-Madison Bradshaw
- 19- Amanda Graves
- 22-Sarah Holliday
- 24-Andy Roberts
- 25-Chuck Hahn
- 26-Fallon Hartsell
- 28-Barbara Weeks
- 28-Candy Long
- 31-Rachel Tolliver

News and Notes

- ☒ - Lets keep in our prayers our expectant mothers, Laura Humphrey and Nicole Pender!
- ☒ - Please continue to pray for Louise Pack, grandmother of Christopher White and Anna Miller who is recovering from a stroke.
- ☒ - Elle Vaughn, baby daughter of Scott and Genna, continues to develop well!
- ☒ - Ryan Nichols' baby niece has improved from her injury and went home this week.
- ☒ - PARENTS: Please register your children for VBS online at www.auchurch.com/vbs.
- ☒ - New class starts this Thurs. at 7:00 p.m. at Rouse's for ladies. "Heaven - O For a Home with God". See Yvette for book.
- ☒ - Please continue to pray for Chuck Hahn's niece, Rebecca Davis.
- ☒ - Troy Godwin's mother, Martha, had successful colon surgery on Monday.
- ☒ - David Ogle will have surgery on May 28 on his other hip.
- ☒ - 1st-5th grade will have a class this Saturday from 6-8 p.m. at the Hahn's.
- ☒ - 6th-12th grade will have a class this Saturday from 6:30-8:30 p.m. Greg Lanier will host.

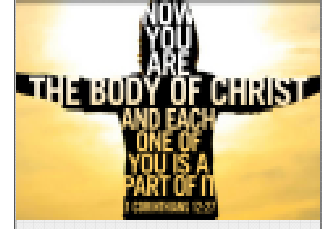
The Auburn Beacon



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

Dealing with Differences in a Way That Glorifies God

By Gary Henry



Thoughts to Ponder

Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, ... that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel (**Philippians 1:27**)

One of the marvels of God's creation is the variety that exists among human beings. We're all equally created by God in His image, and yet no two individuals are exactly alike. Each of us is a unique package of strengths, abilities, personalities, etc. — and each of us deals with life in a different way. Whenever two or more people have the opportunity to work together, it is possible to view their individual differences as a part of the group's strength. Each person in the group brings something to the work that would be missing if that person were absent. A group can have more wisdom and power than an individual could ever have. Any yet, the challenge is for the members of a group to truly work together, making sure that their differences help the work rather than hinder it. The strongest groups are those powered by a common goal or shared vision that is so important to the group that they subordinate their differences to the pursuit of the collective mission. If people care enough about what they are doing together, they won't be hindered by their differences. Their different perspectives will be a part of their strength.

But third, if we don't disagree in a way protects the Lord's honor we'll lose our souls. It's just that simple. There are few sins condemned any more clearly in the New Testament than those of divisiveness and factionalism.

happens is to be viewed within the context of this mission. Whatever difficulties and differences may threaten to disrupt the work are to be subordinated to the more important goal of bringing glory to God. Paul wrote, "Therefore we also pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of this calling . . . that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ" (**2 Thess. 1:11,12**). Differences among Christians should be dealt with in a way that glorifies God. As the Lord's people, we have a goal that is greater than our differences. What we're doing is too important to let the devil separate us.

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SCHEDULE OF SERVICES
Sunday
Bible Class9:30 AM
Worship10:20 AM
Evening Worship 6:00 PM
Wednesday
Bible Classes.....7:00 PM
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This certainly does not mean that the truth is to be compromised or that peace is to be pursued “at any price.” It means that even when matters of great importance to the faith are being debated, the controversy will be conducted in a mature way, one that (1) preserves the Lord’s honor and (2) is most conducive to a unified resolution of the disagreement based on truth. What this requires is learning how to balance courage and consideration. And most of us could use some help with this. Too often, the only two responses we know about are “fight” (unbalanced, immature “courage”) or “flight” (unbalanced, immature “consideration”). How much better if we learned (however difficult that may be) to show both mature courage and mature consideration.

There are at least three good reasons for us to deal with our differences in a way that glorifies God. First, if we don’t do this, it’s not likely that we’ll make much progress removing our differences. If the ideal is for all to come to a more unified understanding and practice of the truth, the best thing we can do is conduct ourselves with godly maturity. When carnal-minded people are debating differences, no one seriously listens to anyone else. Each accuses the other of not listening, and what takes place is simply a “dialogue of the deaf.” But among Christians, those whose concern above all else is for the Lord’s glory, truth ought to have a much better chance of surfacing and being recognized by all parties.

Second, if we fail to behave ourselves in a way that balances courage and consideration we will give the devil unnecessary ammunition. Do we need to be reminded of our responsibility to protect the gospel’s reputation? Have we forgotten the passage that commands us to “adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things” (**Tit. 2:10**)? We are warned not to give any “opportunity to the adversary to speak reproachfully” (**1 Tim. 5:14**), and passages dealing with this aspect of our discipleship can be multiplied many times over (**Rom. 2:23,24; 12:17; 2 Cor. 8:21; 1 Tim. 3:7; 6:1; Tit. 2:5,8; Heb. 13:18; 1 Pt. 2:12; etc.**). The Lord would say no less to spiritual Israel than He said to physical Israel: “The nations shall know that I am the Lord . . . when I am hallowed in you before their eyes” (**Ezek. 36:23**).

But third, if we don’t disagree in a way that protects the Lord’s honor we’ll lose our souls. It’s just that simple. There are few sins condemned any more clearly in the New Testament than those of divisiveness and factionalism. Paul wrote, “Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition, knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned” (**Tit. 3:10,11**). Again, the passages can be multiplied (**Rom. 13:13; Gal. 5:20; Phil. 1:15; 1 Tim. 6:4; 2 Tim. 2:14,23; Jude 19; etc.**). And mark it well: the question of whether one’s teaching is true or false is not the only thing that defines divisiveness. The man or woman who defends the truth in a way that dishonors the truth will have no cooler quarters in eternity than those who taught false doctrine to begin with.

Paul asked the quarreling Corinthians, “Where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?” (**1 Cor. 3:3**). In Christ, we are called to do more than what comes “naturally.” It doesn’t take much character or competence to “strive” (people in the world do it all the time), but Christians are to exemplify a higher standard. When we “stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel” (**Phil. 1:27**), that’s when we demonstrate that our goal is greater than our differences. Jesus commanded, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven” (**Mt. 5:16**). We’re not released from this obligation when controversy breaks out. Indeed, there is never a more important time for us to be careful about our “light” than when disagreements arise. Controversial situations provide a quite special opportunity for the Lord’s light to shine. By handling disagreements in a more honorable way than is known in the world we set an example that is both powerful and distinctive. We show in a very practical way that the gospel really has made a difference in our own lives — and that the Lord’s people have the maturity to work through any difficulty that obscures the glory of the Lord Himself.



Déjà vu ... Déjà vu

By Al Distelkamp

Pardon my French, but lately I’ve been getting “a feeling of already having experienced a present situation,” which is a definition of our title. It relates to how some brethren advocate for the broadening of our fellowship to include other “believers” regardless of whether they believe the doctrine of baptism for the remission of sins.

In two separate periods of time in my lifespan, this has been a troubling issue among brethren. Both times have eventually resulted in the departure of some into more ecumenical churches. In the mid-1950s, while I was still a teenager, I recall how my father decided to move from Minneapolis to the Chicago area specifically to fight a form of modernism that had been affecting the churches over the past couple of decades. Later, in his book *Here Am I, Send Me*, my father wrote about the fallout just in the Chicago area alone: “In seventeen years, seventeen gospel preachers quit the Lord’s church, either to lose faith altogether, or to go to the most modernistic denominations.”

I remember how that battle continued and became a motivating factor in the beginning of *Truth Magazine* in 1956. My recent déjà vu feeling sent me back to my bound volumes of early editions of the magazine in which there were lengthy exchanges and debates between brethren regarding the essentiality of baptism and the resulting spiritual fellowship issues.

Some of the statements made by those who eventually “went out from us” in the 1950s are frightfully similar to what we hear some brethren saying today. Consider this quote from one such preacher who was asked if the purpose of baptism and the Lord’s supper can be realized apart from literal obedience to these rites. After giving lip-service to the importance of baptism and saying that he “would not, knowingly teach anyone to break the least of God’s commands,” he was asked whether he preached the essentiality of baptism. His response was: “I do not. I do not find the New Testament talking of essentiality. I do not believe that every unbaptized person will be eternally lost...” (*Truth Magazine*, Vol. 1, No. 6, p. 7).

I don’t know if the departures that were prevalent in the 1950s were widespread among brethren or if it was a problem peculiar to the Chicago area. I do know that by the end of that decade, the proponents of that error had migrated to more comfortable fellowships and the Lord’s churches in the upper Midwest experienced a brief period of growth and peace.

Whether the ecumenical mindset was eliminated among brethren for a time or merely went underground, I’m not certain, but by the 1970s and 80s the same attitudes were being espoused by some. I believe there was legitimate concern that, in our efforts to defend against Calvinism, the doctrine of salvation by grace had been somewhat neglected. Sermons, articles, and tracts refuted the grace-only

doctrine with very little said about the positive side of salvation by grace.

To the credit of many, this imbalance in preaching and teaching was fairly well remedied, but—as so often happens—some went beyond the biblical teaching about grace and began advocating unity with some in the evangelical world. The most outspoken advocates of what they called “unity in diversity” eventually disassociated themselves with those of us whom they erroneously called “legalists.”

The real issue under consideration is just who is and who isn’t a Christian? The world attributes the name to anyone and everyone who merely professes Christianity, regardless of whether they actually possess it. Recently, we witnessed a reporter who, attempting to pose a “gotcha” question, asked a potential political candidate whether he believed our current President is a Christian. How would you and I answer that question?

The use of the name as an adjective to describe any number of things, businesses and organizations (i.e., Christian music, Christian bookstores, Christian schools, etc.) has contributed to the careless use of “that noble name by which [we] are called” (**Jas. 2:7**). This misuse is so common that I fear that we have gradually succumbed to the practice. When Muslim extremists beheaded 21 men who professed to be Christians, the President was criticized for calling them “Egyptian citizens” instead of “Egyptian Christians.” What did we call them?

I suppose some will view this as meaningless semantics. However, the problem arises when our accommodative use of the word “Christian” evolves into an emotional acceptance into spiritual partnership of people who have not fully submitted to the gospel. Gradually, the fact that many of our Bible-quoting, church-going, morally-upright friends have not submitted to scriptural baptism becomes less important, and the desire for unity obscures the biblical teaching that the only way one can be “in Christ” is by being “baptized into Christ” (**Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27**). Those “who do not bring this doctrine” are failing to “abide in the doctrine of Christ” (**2 Jn. 9-11**).

The desire for unity is an admirable trait if it is a unity based on submission to the teachings of Christ revealed in His word. We do our religious friends and neighbors no service by giving them aid and comfort in their error. What they need to hear is what other believers heard: “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (**Acts 2:38**).

