

Make His Paths Straight

When John the Baptist was calling for the Jews to “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand,” (Matt.3:1-3) Matthew explained that John was the one Isaiah had predicted in Isaiah 40 as “the voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make His paths straight.’” So, John was alerting people that the KING of the kingdom of heaven was on His way, the people needed to be ready to welcome and receive Him, and there should be no obstacles, impediments, or hindrances to all being prepared for the king and His heavenly kingdom. The blessings of that kingdom can only come to a prepared people. Unprepared people will be passed over. So, it is crucial that all men everywhere “repent” and remove anything that may hinder or block you from coming in heart, soul, and mind to King Jesus. There must be a straight path from God’s heart to your heart.

by Terry W. Benton

heart to the King. No job is more important. No earthly goal, no material ambitions, no human relationships, nothing, is more important. If something is more important, then we have not repented and made His path to our heart a straight shot. God will not take second or last place in our interests and goals. He deserves nothing less than a straight path to our hearts. Has there been anything that you have allowed to stand in the way of a great relationship between you and the King and His kingdom? Repent, and make a straight path for your heart to receive the King, to welcome Him into your life. He has a “great salvation” opportunity for all those who obey Him (Heb.5:9; 2:1; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38). Clear out all the useless debris that has stood in the way. The King and His kingdom is your greatest opportunity in this world and in the world to come! Give Him a straight shot to your heart!



There must be nothing more important to us than making sure there is an unhindered path from our

Classes This Week

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|--|---|--|
| Sunday Afternoon 5:15 Kids class in the Auditorium | Tuesday 8:00 PM Truth Seekers in room 2277 of the student center (Note changing room number!) | Thursday 7:00 PM Ladies Class at the Denise Davis' on "Seasoning Your Words" |
|--|---|--|

| February Birthdays | | | | News and Notes |
|---|--|--|---|--|
| Lisa Carter (Luke's mother) | Jesse Godwin (Troy's father and Mac's grandfather) | Nell Holcomb (Ben's grandmother, Joannetta's aunt) | Louise Pack (Anna and Christopher's grandmother) | <p>☒ - Singing night is tonight!</p> <p>☒ - Please remember Emma Ulrich's mom, Gay, in your prayers as she has tests run this Tuesday in TN.</p> <p>☒ - Please continue to pray for Fallon Hartsell as she recovers.</p> <p>☒ - Please remember these family members of Orie Cecil as they battle cancer: his cousin, Tina Atnip, and her son, Caleb, and Orie's grandfather Charles Cecil</p> <p>☒ - Please pray for our expectant mothers: Amanda Stephens, Brooke Perkins, Fallon Hartsell and Jenna Vaughn.</p> <p>☒ - The Andersons have returned home safely with their new daughter, Julianna Piper!</p> <p>☒ - All audio is immediately posted on www.auchurch.com. Cd's are available immediately after each service!</p> |
| Gloria Detmer and Carol Dickerson (Toni Herd's Sisters) | Don Lanier (Father of Greg Lanier) | David Hartsell (Holly and Brad's Father) | Ruth Addison (gmom of April and Julie) | |
| Madeline Morton (Greg Lanier's g'daughter) | Alexander Locke (Jeremiah's cousin's son) | Betty Bradford | Hazel Gilliland and Sherry Carroll (Toni's relatives) | |
| Jean Buchanan (Abbie Harrison's grandmother) | Ermogene Laxson (Sara Lail's grandmother) | Danny Weldon (Rusty Weldon's brother) | William Smith (Ken Sullivan's brother) | |
| Gerald White (Christopher, Anna and Wesley's Father) | Arabelle Rich (Joannetta's aunt) | Sasha Rozier (Makenzie Reynolds' cousin) | Charles Hunt, chuck Hunt's dad | |
| Bonnie Rhodes Kirkley (Toni Herd's family) | Howard Vaughan (Mary Ann's Granddad) | Aubrey Meeks (Toni Herd's Nephew) | James Palmer (Rachel Hobbard's grandfather) | |
| | | | | |

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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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How Far Will You Follow Another Person?

By Larry Rouse



Thoughts to Ponder
"Let them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch."
(Matthew 15:14)

How are you building your personal faith? Jesus exhorted us to be like the man to “who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock” because every foundation will be tested in the floods of life! (Lk 6:48-49) Every person has a foundation upon which they make their decisions and live their lives. Unfortunately some have not seriously looked at what is the real basis of their lives.

Satan has many “alternatives” to what he mockingly would call a “radical ultra-legalistic religion” (There are also many other labels you might insert here). Satan seeks to keep the words of God from the hearts of men. Jesus simply pointed out that the foundation that is built on Him involves serving Him as an absolute Lord and that means handling His delivered words as the only source of direction in our lives. (Lk 6:46; Jn 17:8, 20) Any approach that does not involve a principled, careful approach to the words of Christ is a rejection of Jesus as Lord. The approach you take towards the words of Christ is the very attitude you take towards the Lordship of Christ. “He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him -- the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day.” (Jn 12:48) The influence of Satan urges people to avoid what he calls “legalism” which is in fact a direct attack upon Jesus as Lord.

Sadly, parents can suddenly change what they claim to believe because they refuse to pay the price in losing a relationship with a child! The child is now leading the parents! The child must be justified in her actions!

Jesus plainly warned any who would seek to be His disciple that he must put God first. "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple." (Lk 14:26) I cannot think of a more difficult test than this. Abraham's faith was great because he was willing to sacrifice his only son. This was a “flood” that tested the foundation of faith Abraham had built. The words of Jesus will lead each of us to similar conflicts. Have we built a faith that will cost us something? Is it a faith that follows God and not men? (Gal 1:10)

The Challenge of Choosing a Mate

Outside of the decision to become a Christian, the decision as to who you

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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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(Continued from page 1)

marry is one of the most important choices you will make. Do you want to go to heaven? If you are serious about that then your choice will produce a relationship where both husband and wife are "heirs together of the grace of life." (1 Pt 3:7) You will find one who is a Christian and will help you go to heaven.

When one foolishly allows their hearts to become attached to one who is not a Christian, there will be a great test of faith. On one hand there is the desire to please to one you love but then there is also the direction that Jesus gives to His followers. Most who choose to marry a non-Christian fall away from the Lord.

The Power of Rationalization

It is amazing to see those who were once enlightened to justify that which cannot be justified by God's word. I knew of a Christian woman who dated a non-Christian for many years. The young man was dedicated to a denomination that taught a gospel that was not the gospel of the Lord. She proclaimed to her closest friends and to her parents that she would not consider marrying her boyfriend until he was baptized into Christ for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). Time passed and the desire to marry increased. What kind of foundation was built in her life? Would an honest recognition of what God's word teaches be combined with a refusal to compromise, even if it meant losing a dearly loved boyfriend?

Unfortunately, in this case, rationalization provided an "easy" solution. Just proclaim that salvation is by faith alone apart from any conditional promises (that would include confession and baptism) and presto, the young man was a Christian all along! His denomination was right all along! Now faithful Christians become despised because represent a threat to her rationalizations. She now views those who say: "He who believes and is baptized will be saved" (Mark 16:16) as legalists and also guilty of many other things she may choose to imagine. Legalism is now defined to condemn those who carefully apply God's word. It now becomes easy to cast away like trash any relationship that stands in the way of her self-created "reality."

It is amazing how one person's change of loyalty can now test many other Christians. Sadly, parents can suddenly change what they claim to believe because they refuse to pay the price in losing a relationship with a child! The child is now leading the parents! The child must be justified in her actions! It now becomes easy to deny that the Bible teaches any binding law and also easy to discard and slander faithful

brethren.

Real discipleship demands a stand upon truth regardless of relationships. "Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man's enemies will be those of his own household." (Mt 10:34-36)

Test Your Heart to Know Who is First

A proper foundation will always direct you to the words of Christ regardless of how hard the consequences may be. Paul urged the Corinthians to ask this question and consider the consequences: "Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? -- unless indeed you are disqualified." (2 Cor 13:5) When human relationships tempted the Galatians to accept a false gospel and to cause them to regard Paul as an enemy (Gal 4:16), Paul knew the battle was to have this foundation built again in those he loved. "My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you." (Gal 4:19)

A good heart will always be willing to be tested by God's word. Satan wishes men to rationalize and then quickly cut off all who disagree. When you compromise and make a relationship more important than God, rest assured that your relationship is about to change with the people of God. It is much "easier" in the short term to "live in the world of throw-away people" than to have your decision tested. Your new relationships will urge you to separate from Christians. "They zealously court you, but for no good; yes, they want to exclude you, that you may be zealous for them." (Gal 4:17)

Sadly when one learns to create their own reality and live in the land of "throw-away people" there is no stopping point. It now becomes easy to go as far as agnosticism and even atheism.

Questions to consider

1. Am I willing to follow the Bible without compromise? (Lk 6:46)
2. Am I willing to have good hearted brethren study with me about my decisions? (Acts 17:11)
3. Am I making excuses for my actions by blaming my brethren of having a bad attitude? (Rom 3:4)
4. Am I becoming comfortable with those who "sit in the seat of the scornful"? (Ps 1:1)
5. Am I becoming bitter towards my brethren and even looking down on them in pride? (James 3:14)
6. Am I teachable? Am I willing to admit I am wrong? (Rev 2:10)



Arrogance

By Doy Moyer

Overcoming sin requires overcoming pride, and since God gives grace to the humble, may we all check our hearts with the intent to humble ourselves in the sight of the Lord.

Arrogance is insolence, conceit, a sense of self-superiority and entitlement. It's pretentious, overbearing, and one of the sins that serves to facilitate most other sins. Pride's fruit is found in a host of sins, which is one reason why the Lord hates it so much.

"Haughty eyes" are an abomination (Prov. 6:17), and the Lord is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble (1 Pet. 5:5; Prov. 3:34).

Here's some of what Scripture indicates that we'll see in an arrogant spirit:

Combines with hatred, slander, and other evils (Rom. 1:30; 2 Tim. 3:2).

Doesn't see the importance of others (Rom. 11:18).

Exceeds what is written and given by God (1 Cor. 4:6, 18-19).

Fails to mourn sin (1 Cor. 5:2).

Touts own knowledge (1 Cor. 8:1).

Contrary to love (1 Cor. 8:1-3; 13:4).

Lies against truth (Jas. 3:14).

Boastful, which is evil (Jas. 4:16).

Entices through fleshly desires (2 Pet. 2:18).

Flatters for personal gain (Jude 16).

Combines with blasphemies (Rev. 13:5).

"Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall" (Prov. 16:18).

The shoes will fit many feet. I'm just trying not to wear them; however, by

considering the list above, I know I've put them on far too many times. Pride really is at the root of sin, for it deposes God in our hearts for our own desires. Overcoming sin requires overcoming pride, and since God gives grace to the humble, may we all check our hearts with the intent to humble ourselves in the sight of the Lord.

"But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, 'God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.' Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you." (Jas. 4:6-10)

