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The theme of this year’s lectureship is unique, “Be”. The challenge to live according to God’s will. Of course, the opposite of that is to live outside of God’s will, and in all candor multitudes do so. Many of them (to their shame) while claiming to serve God.

From the blatant to the coy, each share a common trait; namely, they take a portion of the Bible that serves their individual wants and needs without allowing the Bible to be the final word. From the name they wear to the doctrine they practice, men dictate their religion while using God’s name, as though God is behind this religious confusion. That is just not true (1 Corinthians 14:33).

Sound rather bleak? It could be worse, much worse, were it not for those committed to following God’s word. The challenge we face as members of the church of Christ is three fold:

1. Those who reject Christ as the Son of God, the Saviour of the world.
2. Those whose lives are filled with other things. They are immersed in the world.
3. Those taught half a truth, yet believe they are Christians, and in many cases zealous in their religion.

Those who reject Christ as the Son of God, the Saviour of the world

World religions reject Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour. And not a single person involved in those religions has a chance of heaven. Further, any Bible believing person who does not say so is guilty of being ashamed of Christ and his teaching (Mark 8:38). When souls are at stake, political correction has no place in the discussion.

I am not saying that we are to be mean or unkind in standing for the truth, that is not who we are. The first six words of Ephesians 4:15 are ***“But speaking the truth in love”***. The bottom line is found in Galatians 4:16, ***“Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?”*** Paul did not want to become their enemy, but he would risk it to save their souls.

The Bible is clear. Let the scriptures speak about Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God (John 1:14; 18; 3:16; 18; 1 John 4:9):

The rejection of Jesus Christ the Son, is a rejection of God the Father (John 5:23; 15:23; 1 John 2:23).

The hope of heaven is through Jesus Christ:

“...I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6).

“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

“And this is the record, that God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life” (1 John 5:11-12).

Jesus is the Saviour of the world ***“And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world”*** (1 John 4:14).

Those whose lives are filled with other things. They are immersed in the world.

They have what I call visor vision. The world keeps them from looking up; therefore, they rarely think about a judgment day, or the eternity that follows. And when it does cross their minds, it’s pushed away with, “I’m fine. Hell is for really bad people, and I’m not that bad”.

How did they arrive at that conclusion? It was not through a study of the Bible, not at all, rather, by human reasoning. Had they opened the Bible they would have seen how deadly that course is.

“There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death” (Proverbs 14:12).

“O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps” (Jeremiah 10:23).

The only one happy with that situation is the devil, he is the blinder of the mind. ***“But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them”*** (2 Corinthians 4:3-4).

This world has nothing to offer of lasting value, which is why God tells us not to love the world. Friends, hear the scriptures inspired of God. ***“Love not the world, neither the things of the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of the God abideth for ever”*** (1 John 2:15-17).

Those taught a half truth, yet they believe they are Christians, and in many cases zealous in their religion.

The denominational world is full of people who have been deceived into thinking they are in a right relationship with Christ, without doing the will of the Father. Listen to Matthew 7:21-23:

“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter in to the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? And in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity”.

Folks, you can almost hear their desperation as they stand before Christ. There must be a mistake, look at what we have done! Denominational preachers have them believing that heaven will be there home. Until the bitter end!

Into that mix comes members of the church of Christ, hopefully before that terrible end, saying,

“Well, that’s not exactly true”. As you know that message does not resonate with every one. What are we to do? There is one thing I know for certain, we cannot, must not, remain silent.

The words penned by the apostle Paul gives us a path to follow. ***“For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish. To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things? For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ”*** (2 Corinthians 2:15-17).

Get what Paul is saying, he knew the gospel would save some and condemn others. His responsibility was to preach the truth, but he was not responsible for the reception of that truth.

I have attempted to put before you the challenges we face in the world today. The cure is not complicated, all it takes is an honest heart and mind. God has a way of salvation that is identical for every soul. That being true, and it is, for the remainder of this lesson I want you to rid yourselves of the chaos and confusion that is so prevalent in religion. Take your mind off the world that is a robber of the soul, and go with me as we open the book of books!

From Lost to Saved

It is a journey every accountable person must make if heaven will be their home! Of course there is an enemy that does not want you to be saved, an enemy that wants you to fail. The devil is the great deceiver (Revelation 12:9), he is ever present, a predator, who is ever hungry for the souls of men (1 Peter 5:8).

The elders, and members of the 39th Street church of Christ have entrusted me to possess a certain attitude in preaching the gospel, and here it is. ***“And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patience, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will”*** (2 Timothy 2:24-26).

Just so, they have entrusted me to faithfully preach the word (2 Timothy 4:2) in the hope that when good and honest hearts hear the truth, they will strive to recover themselves out of the snare of the devil. You see, hearers have responsibilities as well; namely, to take heed to what you hear and how you hear it (Mark 4:24; Luke 8:18).

Now this, the gospel of Christ is unchangeable (Galatians 1:6-9; 2 John 9-11; Revelation 22:18-19), so this lesson is not tailored to what you may want to hear, but what you need to hear. So it begins with where we all are, or were, at one time, in sin and separated from God, dead spiritually speaking. Unless that changes we will be lost for-

ever (Isaiah 59:1-2; Romans 3:23; 6:23; Ephesians 2:1).

Christ came to change that. He died for all men (Hebrews 2:9) that through him we might live (Galatians 2:19-20). Because of his death on Calvary, he made reconciliation unto God possible (2 Corinthians 5:20-21). He had a plan, and a place for us to be saved. The gospel of Christ which is the power of God unto salvation, tells us about that plan as well as the place purchased with his own blood (Romans 1:16-17; Acts 20:28).

Therefore, you must hear the word of God, because the word of God produces faith (Romans 10:17). Without faith? You have no chance of pleasing God. **“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him”** (Hebrews 11:6).

You must believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Unless you believe that you will die in your sins (John 8:24). The evidence given that would warrant our faith in Christ Jesus is overwhelming. From the first verse of the first book of the gospel, **“The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham”** (Matthew 1:1). Jesus is the King and the Saviour. To the last book of the gospel record, in the next to the last chapter. **“And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name”** (John 20:30-31).

You must repent of your past sins. Repentance involves a change in heart that leads to a change in life (Matthew 21:28-31). Repentance is not an option, **“And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent”** (Acts 17:30). Jesus said it plainly, I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish” (Luke 13:3; 5).

You must confess Jesus before men to be confessed by him (Matthew 10:32-33). Confession is unto salvation (Romans 10:10). In the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch the confession is illustrated for us. **“And as they went on their way, they came to a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, if thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him”** (Acts 8:36-38).

You must **be** baptized. “Well”, says one, “it’s about time you arrived at the point of this lesson”! I know, but God’s plan of salvation does not begin with baptism. Hearing the word of God, believing that Jesus is the Son of God, repenting of past sins, and confessing Christ before men, are steps taken together that brings you to this point, but understand you are still lost.

Hearing, believing, repentance and confession are absolutely necessary, but you are still in sin! Baptism is for the remission of sins. **“Then Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”** (Acts 2:38).

Again, in Acts 22:16, Ananias said to Saul, **“And why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord”** Beloved, baptism puts you into Jesus Christ.

“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? (Where did Jesus shed his blood? In his death. Where do we contact the blood of Christ? When we are baptized into his death.) Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection” (Romans 6:3-5).

If you make that journey from lost to saved you have followed God’s plan of salvation. Now, where is the place of the saved? Jesus does not call us out of the world and not have a place for us to go. In Matthew 16:18, Jesus promised to build his church, his precious blood would purchase the church (Acts 20:28), the saved would be added to his church (Acts 2:47). **“...Even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the Saviour of the body”** (Ephesians 5:23).

The church is the body, the body is the church. **“And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all”** (Ephesians 1:22-23). **“And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence”** (Colossians 1:18).

How many bodies are there? One (Ephesians 4:4). Where is reconciliation unto God? In one body (Ephesians 2:16). What is the body? The church, how many churches are there? One! Everyone in the first century who obeyed the gospel was added to the church of Christ. Why? Because that was the church Jesus built, purchased by him, it was his body! Not a single denomination existed in the first century. Folks, lets step out of the confusion and chaos, go back to the book of books. God has a plan and a place for all of us!

This tract is condensed from a lesson presented at the
34th Annual Mid-West Lectures,
“BE” - The Challenge To Live God’s Way
To hear or view the complete lesson go to
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The Challenge To Follow God’s Way Of Salvation

*“Be baptized every one of you
in the name of Jesus Christ for
the remission of sins”*
(Acts 2:38)

by

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International Bible Studies Tract Series