



Northside Proclaimer

Proclaiming The Word Of The Lord

1 Thessalonians 1.8

Northside Church Of Christ Welcomes You!

January 3, 2016

When Brethren Reject the Truth #2

Bryan Garlock

Truth is rejected when men oppose that which is truthful. Biblical truth is rejected when men oppose righteousness and hold down the truth by their ungodliness.

The world has rejected the truth. Paul testified of this in his letter to the Romans when he showed that when one does not glorify or acknowledge God, is unthankful to Him and exchanges truth for a lie, etc. his suppression of truth has led to rejection (Romans 1.18-32).

Unfortunately, even some brethren reject the truth. In this series of articles, we want to examine many ways in which Christians have rejected and thereby hinder God's truth.

Consider the following easy-to-understand passage:

"But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you" (Matthew 6.33).

In the midst of teaching that our heavenly Father will take care of our physical needs, Jesus placed one of the greatest stumbling blocks ever known before all mankind: to put first things first. From the context, that which would be "added to you" was our necessities of life (6.25-34). He instructed that we ought not to be anxious for anything but instead place our full trust and confidence in our Father to supply these things for "...your Father knows that you need them" (Luke 12.22-32).

In this article we want to focus on Jesus' command to "...seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness." It is quite obvious that many brethren have rejected the truth of this passage. Whether they do not fully understand or grasp the importance of Jesus' words or they have simply refused to accept His teachings this writer knows not.

What can be confirmed is that some Christians do not put first things first. That's essentially what Jesus is requiring of all His disciples. No matter how difficult, inconvenient, embarrassing, uncomfortable, how serious the consequences and the amount of persecution one may have to endure, the disciple of Jesus must put God first. God's word affects every aspect of the Christian's life: his faith, attitude, outlook on life, interest, etc. Furthermore every thought should be centered on emphasizing spiritual things first or as Paul worded it, "... take every thought captive to obey Christ..." (2 Cor. 10.5).

Such a command truly separates the loyal from the pretenders, the saved from the lost and the cowards from the brave. Simply put, too many are afraid to follow this command. It takes a brave person to rely on God's promises so much that he is willing to overcome the frequent hardships attached to putting God first.

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Announcements

- Remember the shut in's.
- Pray for the church and one another.
- Remember the spiritual sick among us.
- Call or email Bryan to add announcements, thanks.
- We need volunteers for door knocking. Please see Bryan.
- We need volunteers for picking folks up. Please see Bryan.
- Pray for Kim Haines. She lost her grandfather.

Five Day Reading Plan

Mon: Gen. 1-5
Tues: Gen. 6-10
Wed: Gen. 11-15
Thurs: Gen. 16-20
Fri: Gen. 21-25

Some may wonder why such a command was issued. The answer may confound, but is simple: we are not our own. Paul said Christ purchased us with His own blood (Acts 20.28) and later wrote, "...You are not your own, for you were bought with a price..." (1 Cor. 6.19-20). If you belong to someone else your responsibility is to that person first. That may not sit well with the average American and unfortunately some Christians. It goes against the grain and certainly against our country's motto of "Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

What better way to test the genuineness of professed discipleship? What course of action will the disciple take in the worst of times, in the difficult or inconvenient circumstances and during those embarrassing situations? Will he put first things first? Jesus' words are a test of discipleship.

Since God's commandments are righteousness (Psalm 119.172), seeking God's righteousness involves obeying His instructions. How we dress, treat our family, brethren and fellowmen, conduct ourselves in public and even "work out our salvation" (Phil. 2.12) are all affected for the good or bad by whether or not we obeyed God.

Consider the man who chooses to forgo the assembling of the saints to work overtime. Surely some would argue that he must provide for his family and put food on the table. Yet has he fully trusted the sayings of Jesus: "Seek ye first... and all these things shall be added unto you..."? Contextually speaking either Jesus is saying His Father will provide for the necessities of the person placing Him first or this writer misunderstands the passage. Further who would argue that this man would be worse off if he chose to turn down work to worship God and assemble with the saints? Finally could it not be argued that he may need to evaluate his possessions in life? Has he allowed his bills to rise to such a level that he can no longer feed his family? If such is the case his need is now a *created need rather than a legitimate need*. Such a need *forces* him to have to put work before God. This man must correct those things in his life.

What of the person who emphasizes objects, activities, sports, people, etc. over God's righteousness? This is the person who constantly studies his watch during services. He has made obligations to the world (obligations not necessarily sinful) and yet because of these commitments has to cut short the worship of his God early enough to arrive on time for his pending duties. Not only has he left God behind, but all the while he has been checking his watch every five to ten minutes making sure he isn't going to be late. Now his obligation to God has been disrupted by distraction and cut short. Surely we haven't conditioned ourselves to believe this is putting first things first. Our physical responsibilities ought to come second to our spiritual duties, regardless of the consequences, the embarrassment, or the persecution! Such is the life of a faithful disciple of Jesus.

This writer realizes these illustrations do not sit well with some. If one will simply reflect on the words above with a heart bent on serving God, he will see that such words are necessary to pinpoint problems in our lives. Maybe a similar situation to the illustrations above may help one to correct his intentional or unintentional self-seeking mentality. Furthermore let us never be too dogmatic about these situations. All should admit that there are times when circumstances are beyond the control of the seeking-first Christian. God understands this and so does this writer.

Finally, if God is not first in every part of our lives, He is, at best, second. He is placed on the backburner and is likened to the last-to-be-picked for dodge ball. How do we feel when family and friends do such a thing? Do we feel worthless, like a nobody? Do we get upset, jealous, even angry at times? That is essentially what we are doing when God is not first in every avenue of life.

Christians, do we believe Jesus or have we rejected His truth? God should be at the beginning of every decision we make and every action we take. It is no wonder God began His book with four important words, "In the beginning God..." (Gen. 1.1). When we place God in the beginning, in the forefront of all we do, we place Him in His proper place. BG