



Preparing Souls To Serve The Lord

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Fundamental Points That Make Restoration Possible

By

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Built By The Lord

“Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain. It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so he giveth his beloved sleep. Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward. As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate” (Ps. 127:1-5 KJV).

In the above Psalm, there are fundamental principles that relate to this study. (1) Whether we are building a family (house, family with children), or building a city (even the city of Jerusalem), we need to be sure that the Lord may support our efforts. David, like many others, did not keep before him the will of the Lord as he married many wives, fathered many children, and lived to see the sad consequences of his actions—the sword never departed from his house. Did they not build the city

of Jerusalem, take great pride in having it among them, but live to see the Lord use a pagan nation to bring it to ruin? (2) The preservation of our work also depends upon the Lord. Jesus vividly illustrated this in the account of the rich farmer. Labored he did, was successful in his toil, but neglected to have the Lord in his efforts and never enjoyed the fruits of his labor and toil (Lk. 12:13-21). (3) As children are a heritage of the Lord, so are the fruits of our labor. We are to be engaged in sowing and watering, but knowing always that it is God who gives the increase (1 Cor. 3:6-7). Is this not the idea expressed by Paul in Philippians 4:1? “Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, *my* dearly beloved.” In the letter to the Corinthians, Paul was well aware of the relationship of his toil to the ultimate outcome of the will of God and the will of men (1 Cor. 3:8-23).

With these thoughts in mind let us consider some fundamental principals that are necessary if we would restore

New Testament Christianity, if we would build the house of God which is the church of the living God that He intends to be the support and foundation of the truth (1 Tim. 3:14-15).

Absolute

Point of Reference

The Bible makes it clear that if we would restore New Testament Christianity, we must have an absolute reference point, and the New Testament provides us with insight into what that reference point is—The Chief Corner Stone—Jesus Christ. “And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner *stone*” (Eph. 2:20). “The ακρογωνιαιος here is the primary foundation-stone at the angle of the structure by which the architect fixes a standard for the bearings of the walls and cross-walls throughout” (W. W. Lloyd, quoted in Robertson’s New Testament Word Pictures, Power Bible CD. Phil Linder, Online Publishing. CD-ROM Version, 2004).

From Peter we read, “Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in

Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded" (1 Pet. 2:6). This stone is (elect) chosen by God and not by man. This stone is precious, highly esteemed and cherished by the faithful. Those who believe and trust in the Stone, will not be confounded (put to shame). This implies that those who fail to put their trust in Him will be put to shame.

Jesus Himself used this principle to show His Jewish contemporaries that their efforts would result in a terrible loss and shame if they rejected the stone. In the parable of the householder and the unfaithful husbandmen, the Jewish authorities recognize the punishment deserved by unfaithfulness (Mt. 21:21). To their proper response, Jesus stated the following:

"Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them. But when they sought to lay hands on him, they feared the multitude, because they took him for a prophet" (Mt. 21:42-46).

Can you name religious movements that are not true to

the Builders code? When we do not have our point of reference on that which the Lord chooses, our efforts will fail (Mt. 7:21-27; Lk. 6:46). Every religious movement known to man since the New Testament era has been built either by taking its fundamental directives from the Christ or from men. We can know the difference, we must know the difference! If the Lord has a house (church, family, kingdom), then one church is not as good as another. It is His words that will judge us (Jn. 12:48). Restoration is not possible if we do not take every "measurement" from the Chief Corner Stone (Col. 3:17).

The Apostles Doctrine The Doctrine of Christ

It is imperative that we understand the relationship of the Corner Stone to the directives of His master builders (1 Cor. 3:9-10; Jn. 14:26; 16:13-14). There is no church with God's approval apart from the apostles' doctrine (Acts 2:42). Anyone going beyond the doctrine of Christ which is expressed in the apostles' doctrine does not have God's blessings (2 Jn. 9-11). If people would restore the religion of Jesus Christ as taught in the New Testament, they cannot encourage and condone those with a different agenda. The restoration of true religion will necessitate a mind that is molded by the teaching of the apostles and inspired writers of the New Testament. Consider the admonitions of Paul:

"(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)

Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:4-5). "For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise" (2 Cor. 10:12). "For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth" (2 Cor. 10:18).

Proper Building Material

If we are to realize the religion taught by Jesus Christ that is revealed in the Bible, we must exemplify the proper character that would implement the principles taught. The house of the Lord cannot be constructed with shoddy material. Our labor and toil will be tested by the Lord, and the testing will reveal the materials we have utilized.

"Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall

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be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire" (1 Cor. 3:12-15).

In the sermon on the mount, the Lord made known the type individual He wanted for His kingdom. This person would be humble, able to mourn for sin, be self-disciplined (meek), hunger and thirst for righteousness, be merciful, be pure in heart, be a peacemaker, endure persecution for righteousness sake (Mt. 5:3-12). This person is set in contrast with the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees (Mt. 5:20).

Questions? Could the person who cultivates the attributes of the beatitudes be attracted to the concept of restoration? Could a person who is disinterested in some of the attributes of the beatitudes be successful in restoring the religion of Jesus Christ as taught in the Bible?

True spirituality may be understood by a careful study of the qualifications of elders and deacons (1 Tim. 3:1-15; Tit. 1:5-9). Insight into the type person God desires we become may be had by considering what men have called the "Christian graces" recorded in Second Peter Chapter 1. This person will add to his faith, virtue (moral courage), knowledge, self-control, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love.

Questions? Do you think one not

having the proper interest in these attributes can be "fellowshipped" into the proper interest in restoring the religion of Jesus Christ as taught in the Bible? Do you think that those in the "broad way" are characterized with these attributes (Mt. 7:13-14)? Do you think that the person cultivating the beatitudes mentioned above, and the "Christian graces" would be able to find the narrow gate and the straitened way (Mt. 7:14)?

Conclusion

Is it possible for the servants of the Lord to cast their pearls before swine, and to give that which is holy to the dogs (Mt. 7:6)? What would be involved in casting pearls before swine, and giving that which is holy to the dogs? Do not the above principles help us to understand why the goal to restore the religion of Jesus Christ as taught in the Bible appeals to some and is opposed by others?

If we are to restore the religion of Jesus Christ as taught in the Bible, we must be dedicated to letting the Lord Himself give the directions. If He does not, our labor will be to no ultimate good. In restoring true religion, Jesus must be the ultimate point of reference in all that we think and do. In restoring the faith once for all delivered to the saints, we must follow the apostles' doctrine/the doctrine of Christ. We will not remain true to our effort to restore the faith, the gospel, the truth unless we are committed to the love of truth and obedience to the same (2 Pet. 3:14-18; 2 Thess. 2:10-12). Let

me close with the following words from our Lord:

"And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God" (Jn. 3:19-21). [This is a portion of the material being prepared for the Appendix of the 2006 Lectureship Book. Editor]

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Blessings

Spiritual and Material

By

Gene Burgett

"If we have sown spiritual things for you, is it a great thing if we reap your material things" (1 Cor. 9:11).

The above passage contains two principles Paul sets forth to show it is right to pay a man for doing the work of an evangelist. The two principles are: (1) spiritual things are superior to material things, and (2) it is right to financially support those who provide spiritual things. Based on these two principles I am appealing to my readers to make the Florida School of Preaching one of the works you financially support.

The Florida School of Preaching has been providing spiritual things to churches and individuals since 1969 by training men to preach the gospel. Obviously, the men trained have reaped spiritual benefits from this effort, but on a larger scale the

churches where these men have worked have also received spiritual benefits from our work. I really do not think it is possible for anyone this side of heaven to measure the spiritual good that has been accomplished by this school during the past thirty-six years of its existence. Is it to be measured in baptisms? Is it measured in terms of churches planted? How about measurement in light of Christians edified and strengthened in the faith? In addition to the spiritual good sown through the men trained, there is the lectureship and all of the printed material that continue to provide spiritual good throughout the world. However one chooses to gauge the work of the school, it is clear that many

have been sown spiritual blessings, therefore, it is right for churches as well as individuals to support the work of training men to preach. Asking for money is never easy. I am an elder in a local congregation and I am very much aware of how many appeals churches receive for financial assistance. Through the years we have not made it our habit to make constant appeals for support. Churches and individuals who have appreciated our work through the years have been very generous in their financial support. Do not, however, mistake the fact that we do not make constant appeals for support as a sign that we do not need financial assistance. Standing for truth often comes at a price. It is not unusual for

congregations to drop their support when the school refuses to compromise the truth.

My appeal is for churches of Christ who have respect for an organization determined to speak where the Bible speaks and to remain silent where the Bible is silent to put us in their budgets. My appeal is for individuals who want to see men trained to preach the gospel without addition or subtraction to consider the Florida School of Preaching when it comes time to consider where you will leave your earthly goods when departing this life. The Florida School of Preaching needs your support. Won't you please help us?

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