



The Reflector

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Just Wait and See

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“Wait” has almost become a dirty four letter word in our culture. We don’t like to wait. Someone has said that the American prayer should be, “Lord, give me patience and give it too me right now.”

We are told that “we walk by faith, and not by sight.” (2 Cor. 5:7). In the preceding verse we are told that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. If we want to be in the actual presence of the Lord, so as to literally see Him, we will have to *wait* for that later in the next world. If we are not careful, we will want to be in His actual presence so badly right *now* in this present world that we imagine that we actually see Him and hear Him speak to us and we converse with Him as face to face and actually feel his touch as we do with our earthly relationships. This is an illusion.

To walk by faith is to walk with Him without the benefit of literally seeing, hearing, touching, or being touched by Him. That is the kind of relationship we are waiting for. Now we must be content to only “see”, “hear” and “experience” Him by faith. Faith comes by hearing the word of God. (Rom. 10:17). I have to depend on the words of the divine revelation in the Scriptures to know Him rather than knowing Him through my fleshly senses. I must accept that and wait. In due time, if we remain faithful to Him, we will experience what it is like to walk with Him by sight – actually seeing and hearing Him.

Through a study of His word we can know who He is, what His will is, including how He will save us from sin and how He wants us to live as saved people in fellowship with Him in order to enter

into that eternal salvation at which time we will be able to actually see Him. Just you *wait* and see.

That God has in times past actually spoken to certain men audibly and directly cannot be denied. Some were allowed to experience the actually literal presence of the Lord. Chosen ones of these men have passed on what they saw and heard directly and the accounts of their personal encounters come to us through their word – the inspired Scriptures. We believe their word and act accordingly by faith. If that is not sufficient, then we have a problem.

Remember the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus. The rich man wanted Abraham to send someone to the earth to warn his lost brothers. He was told they have Moses and the prophets let them hear them. In what sense did they have Moses and the prophets? Were they in their actual presence? No. They had the writings of Moses and the prophets in the Old Testament. Likewise, we experience the Lord only by faith through hearing His word given to us through the agency of the “apostles and prophets.” (Cf. Ephesians 3:5).

I long for the time when it will be possible for me to actually “walk with Him, and talk with Him” but for now I will have to walk by faith, content to talk to Him through prayer and have Him talk to me through the Scriptures.” Does that mean that He is not *real* to me because I don’t actually hear Him speak, or see His face or touch His person? No. He is *real* because of the evidence I have of Him in the Scriptures. *How* real He may seem to me depends on the strength of my faith in the word revealed by “the apostles and prophets.” ■

Another Medley of Matters

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(Sometime ago we shared some short pieces that we had previously posted on FaceBook. Reader feedback was good, so we decided to share some more of our FaceBook posts)



A word or two about the Lord's Supper...

When I get to thinking about folks wanting to make a long drawn out near extravaganza out of Lord's Supper, (I saw one You Tube video of a church using electronic visual effects to have an image of a huge cross floating through the auditorium during the Supper), I can't help but think of the simplicity and brevity of Paul's account of the Lord's instituting the Supper:

"For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the

Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me." In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." (1 Corinthians 11:23-25 NKJV)

Look at the simplicity of it:

1. He took the bread and briefly explained the significance of it ("Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you") and why they were to eat it ("in remembrance of Me.")

2. Likewise He took the cup, briefly explained the significance of it: ("This cup is the new covenant in My blood") and why they were to drink it (in remembrance of Me.)

To sum it up, the observance involved three simple things:

1. Giving thanks for the two elements.
2. A brief explanation of the significance of each.
3. A brief explanation of the reason for observing it.

Why is such a simple and succinct observance

not meaningful enough for some? Could it be a heart problem?



A word to parents, elders, and preachers

...

We have a generation of young Christians coming into adulthood who are earnestly desiring to improve their spiritual knowledge and to become better Christians. Most of these are avid readers of books, social media, and internet blogs, along with viewing You Tube videos that seemingly offers them in-depth information on Apologetics to help shore up their faith and moral/ethics guide lines to being a better example of Christian character. This desire for improvement is noble.

Why this should be of concern to parents, elders and preachers.

The overwhelming majority of the better writers and video makers of material on apologetics and moral/ethical behavior are so called "evangelicals" whose views of salvation from sin and the working of God's grace is very much askew, often reflecting rank Calvinism. Herein is the danger. A young person not well grounded in the gospel plan of salvation, the true nature of God's grace and place of God's church in the divine scheme of things can easily be caught by the hook (usually a very small portion of the book, blog, or video) that is embedded in the glitter of the lure that first attracted the reader or viewer. This is why parents must be diligent in their efforts to ground their children in the doctrine of Christ in these things. It is why congregations need to be constantly reminded, in the Bible classes and sermons, of the plan of salvation, nature of grace and faith, and the church. Along with this they need often to hear the answers to the errors taught by Christians so-called on these topics. If this is done, then hopefully, as well-grounded disciples, they can benefit from the good apologetic material and moral/ethical teaching without being sucked into the damnable error that is found embedded in

most of these publications. If they are well grounded enough to be unaffected by the doctrinal error, then maybe when they recommend them to others that they will warn of the specific error that is embedded in the midst of all the good information – instead of just a weak “there may be some things that I may not agree with” disclaimer.

But, be aware that there is likely to be an element in the church, who want only moralizing and motivational preaching, that is not going to like such a curriculum.



About pressure to make a false confession ...

“Open your hearts to us: we wronged no man, we corrupted no man, we took advantage of no man.” (2 Corinthians 7:2 ASV).

Paul’s words were apparently his answer to those who had falsely accused him and his companions. Was he being stubborn and arrogant by claiming no fault? No. Nor was he saying that he was perfect, or sinless in every respect, but that in the things of which he had been accused, he was not guilty. Paul was well aware that he was capable of being wrong and aware of his fleshly weaknesses and the need for constant vigilance to avoid falling away (1 Cor. 9:27). But, it is apparent that he was not willing to “take the fall” by confessing to that which he had not done. To suggest that one confess to something that he does not believe he has done is asking him to lie. Lying is a sin.

Whenever one wrongs another he should repent and confess to the other his wrong and ask for forgiveness. In fact, one must do it to please God. But, there have been times when I have heard well-meaning but naive brethren, “in the interest of peace,” to urge an innocent party to “swallow his pride” and “break the ice” by confessing anyway. They even accuse them of arrogance if they refuse to do this. While this might result in a measure of peace between the parties, is that really the scriptural course to take?

This kind of thinking may be the result of living in a culture that freely uses the quick-fix method of problem solving. A culture where it is popular to teach forgiveness without repentance because this is easier and quicker than bringing one to

repentance. This course is popularly recommended with a suggestion that it will make one feel better about himself.

As an observer of a dispute, it is easier and quicker to assume that both parties are at fault, than to make a earnest effort to find out where the fault really lies before offering advice as to how to settle it. Now, if after getting the facts, rather than assuming them, both parties are found to be at fault they both should be encouraged to each confess to the other his fault.

When you believe you have been wronged, you should patiently try to convince the offender of his wrong. But, until you are able to convince him, it would be unfair to him to ask him to confess to something he does not believe he has done.

Then, of course, there are always disputes in which we “don’t have a dog in that hunt.” In that case we might consider the words of Solomon: “He who passes by and meddles in a quarrel not his own Is like one who takes a dog by the ears.” (Proverbs 26:17 NKJV)



Another “modesty” tip from this old fogey ...

Folks, when standing before the mirror, trying to determine if what you are about to go out in public wearing is showing too much skin take a couple of more looks.

Look at yourself bending over to pick up something off the floor.

Sit down in a chair like you usually sit and look at your dress or “shorts” (both men and women) and see what one standing or sitting across from you can see.

No charge for this tip. No bill will be sent.



Canceling out a lifetime of faithfulness ...

One of the sadder things we can see is a brother or sister, who has lived a life of faithfulness for many years, turn away into promoting and/or practicing error. Just as their sins were remembered no more, when they turned from them to practicing righteousness, now by turning away into error all the righteousness they have done is forgotten.

"But if the wicked man turns from all his sins

which he has committed and observes all My statutes and practices justice and righteousness, he shall surely live; he shall not die. "All his transgressions which he has committed will not be remembered against him; because of his righteousness which he has practiced, he will live....."But when a righteous man turns away from his righteousness, commits iniquity, and does according to all the abominations that a wicked man does, will he live? All his righteous deeds which he has done will not be remembered for his treachery which he has committed and his sin which he has committed; for them he will die....."When a righteous man turns away from his righteousness, commits iniquity, and dies because of it, for his iniquity which he has committed he will die. "Again, when a wicked man turns away from his wickedness which he has committed and practices justice and righteousness, he will save his life. (Ezekiel 18:21-22, 24, 26-27 NASB)

Sometimes, when one speaks negatively of a brother who, after many years of teaching the truth, has turned to teaching error, people will criticize the one for so speaking negatively and urge him to consider all the good that the brother taught and did for many years before turning away. Folks, get real. It doesn't work that way with God. Just as God does not remember the past errors of one who has turned from them to him, he does not remember the past teaching of truth of one who has turned from truth to teaching error.



Behind the over emphasis on the subject of grace ...

During the 70's we had to deal with what we called the "Grace-Fellowship" question. We pointed out then that the distorted view of God's grace, being pushed by a relative few talented and well-known young men, was just a pretext for pushing for a broader fellowship than the Scriptures would allow. The idea then was that since none of us are perfect, either in knowledge or practice, and thus stand in need of the grace of God, we have no right to deny fellowship to anyone who professes to know Christ. These did not try hard to hide the fact that their view of grace was

tied to their desire for a broader fellowship. We watched these young men as most of them went further and further afield.

Again we are having to deal with that same distorted view of grace being taught even more widely that it was in the 70's. Generally speaking, these new pushers of the distorted view of the grace of God are saying little about a connection to a desire for a broader fellowship. Yet, when we look into it closely there is the same old broader fellowship element deeply embedded. As we have watched the recent wave of distorted teaching on grace play out, it has become evident that they are seeking a broader fellowship. Some are now leaving their former fellowship and becoming active members of groups to whom they previously would not extend the "hand of fellowship." It is evident that their agenda goes much further than just emphasizing grace over obedience – it about breaking out of their perceived narrowness of the past in favor of a broader religious fellowship.

"And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. (Ephesians 5:11 KJV).

"Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds." (2 John 1:9-11 KJV)

"Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. "Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it." (Matthew 7:13-14 NKJV)



Hard boiled ...

I am sometimes asked why I am so hard-boiled in my stance on certain issues. I tell them that it is because I have been in hot water so long. I try to be kind and considerate, but I try to be understood as well. I guess to what extent I have succeeded in this is for someone else to judge. ■