

The Lakeview Lamp

“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” – Psalm 119:105

Nov 30

2008

Worthy of the Gospel

Terry Sanders

The late J. M. McCaleb wrote a song entitled “The Gospel Is for All.” When one reads of the unselfish sacrifices of this pioneer preacher in foreign fields, one is further impressed by the words of the song. McCaleb labored for many years in Japan. The field he chose was not one that was popular with his brethren, especially as hostilities which lead to war began to build. One wonders how many times McCaleb may have heard words of disfavor toward preaching the gospel in this particular field. He probably heard it at least implied that some were not worthy of the gospel. Nevertheless, the words of his song clearly teach that all, regardless of where they may be found, are worthy of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Brethren, does it bother you when Christians talk as though there is a class of people, determined by race, social standing, or whatever, that is not worthy of the gospel? It should. Let us beware that we do not become so aloof and smug that we forget that Jesus was the great physician who came to heal those who were sick and did not predetermine whether they were worthy by some invented standard of worthiness (**Lk. 5:27-32**).

We are told that the “*grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men*” (**Titus 2:11**). We are also told how God’s people are to live and how this is made possible by the death of Jesus Christ (**Titus 2:12-14**). Paul in speaking to an idolatrous Gentile audience did not recoil from them, for he understood that the gospel was for all men, everywhere (**Acts 17:30-31**). Has it changed?

Who did Jesus go to with His teaching? He went to the lost (**Lk. 19:10**). He went to a centurion and praised his worthiness (**Lk. 7:9**). He sat and taught publicans and sinners at a time when it was popular for religious leaders to avoid them (**Matt. 9:10**). Jesus went to a woman of Canaan (**Matt. 15:21-28**). He spent time with a leper (**Lk. 5:12-14**). You get the idea. Jesus culled no one! Can we do differently and still claim to follow His example?

Is there a better object lesson than Peter in learning that the gospel is for all? Please consider what Peter had to learn. He learned that foods were no longer common or unclean (**Acts 10:15**). Gentiles were once viewed as common or unclean. Yet an angel told Cornelius, a Gentile, to send for Peter (**Acts 10:3-6**). Peter was told to go to Cornelius (**Acts 10:19-20**). Finally, Peter realized the intent of all this (**Acts 10:34-35**). Later Peter would explain what happened, basically saying that all should be taught the gospel (**Acts 11:18**). When the “council” met in Jerusalem, Peter once again explained that there was now no difference between Jew and Gentile (**Acts 15:9**). Paul later said that Jew and Gentile were no longer two, but one (**Eph. 2:14-18**). Is there a difference today? Does a sheet need to be let down today to teach us that the gospel is for all?

Now let me present a person to you and see if he is worthy of the gospel. This is a person who is very zealous in his opposition to Jesus and the church. He is described as a “blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious.” Is this person worthy of the gospel? Would you go to him, would I? This person so described is Saul of Tarsus (**1 Tim. 1:12-16**) or, as we better know him, the apostle Paul. In the Timothy passages, Paul prescribes the glory to Jesus for his salvation. And yet, there is another to consider also. Whereas all glory goes to Christ, someone had to take the gospel to Saul (Paul) and teach him (**Acts 9:6**). The Lord selected Ananias to go to Saul and tell him what he needed to do (**Acts 9:11-12**). Ananias entertained doubt about Saul’s worthiness (**Acts 9:13-14**). Ananias had to be told that Saul suited the Lord (**Acts 9:15**). What Ananias thought didn’t matter. The outcome? Ananias went (**Acts 9:17-18; 22:13-16**).

What is the conclusion of the whole matter? Jews, Gentiles, the lost, publicans, sinners, Canaanites, lepers, blasphemers, persecutors, the injurious, all men everywhere are worthy of the gospel. Do we arbitrarily decide to set standards of being “worthy of the gospel” and set them so high that, in the final analysis, no one is worthy? If so, it is to our shame, for when we have done so we have outdone the Lord!

The gospel is to be taken into all the world (**Mk. 16:15**). It is not a “here it is, come and get it” activity. Where would any of us be if someone had not come to us? What if we had not met some arbitrary standard of worthiness, where would we be? People are lost without the gospel. They will remain so if we do not go. The gospel is for all.

God's Flair for Irony

author unknown

The history of the Bible is laced with irony. Jacob deceived his father for the blessing and is then deceived by his uncle in the wedding tent. Joseph is sold into Egypt as a slave by his brothers, and years later they become his servants in Egypt. Jezebel lived by the code of brutal violence and died a brutal death ("He who lives by the sword..."). Paul persecuted Christians and then became one.

Life is often ironic because God has a creative way of punishing evildoers. You may think you can get what you want through sinful and selfish means, but you won't. Often the pain you deal to others through your wickedness will be served back to you on a silver platter.

Life is also ironic when it comes to the salvation and deliverance of God's people. The suffering inflicted by the enemy often becomes the avenue by which God's people gain victory. God's people find joy in sorrow, fullness in emptiness, life in death.

Jesus spoke of possibly the greatest irony of all when He said, *"For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it"* (Lk 9:24).



News and Notes

Members:

- * Mary Burnett is not doing well.
- * Metty Fain remains in Highland Manor Nursing Home; Room B2; 215 Highland Circle Dr; Portland, TN 37148.
- * Fran Pickens continues to have pain issues.

Absent: Ken and Vickie Berry (IN), Melissa Moore (AL), Jennifer Nicholson and children (AL, morning only).

New Reports: Edward Rangel (Puerto Rico).



"Praise the LORD! Praise, O servants of the LORD, praise the name of the LORD."

Psalm 113:1