

February 27, 2022

Viewpoint from the Valley Grove Church Of Christ

No Looking Back

By Jonathan Glaesemann

“And another also said, ‘Lord, I will follow You, but let me first go and bid them farewell who are at my house.’ But Jesus said to him, ‘No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God’” (Luke 9:61-62).

When we become a Christian and we begin our new life as followers of Jesus, we must realize that there is no turning back. This man that Jesus is speaking to in Luke 9 wanted to follow Jesus, but he wanted to go first and bid those who were at his house farewell. Jesus showed him that if he wished to follow Him, he was to leave it all behind. This would include those at his house to whom he wanted to bid farewell.

In Jesus’ illustration in Luke 9:62, He uses the idea of a man putting his hand to the plow. This, of course, would represent someone beginning to follow Christ. He then says that if he looks back after putting his hand to the plow, he is not fit for the kingdom of God. Jesus is basically showing us here that when we begin to follow Christ, if we look back and dwell on what we were in the past, we are not worthy of being a follower of Christ. A person who dwells upon who he was, instead of who he has become, has become weak and will sooner or later fall back into his past. Let’s think for a moment that you are plowing your garden. At some point in time you look back at what you have already plowed, and when this happens, you will most likely find yourself plowing a crooked row. When we look back and dwell upon what we were in the past, sooner or later we will stray from the straight and narrow path we need to be on. This is why we must stay focused on our goal and never look back.

Jesus illustrates this another way in Luke 17:32, when He says, *“Remember Lot’s wife.”* There have been many thoughts as to why she looked back. Maybe it was because of the friends that she had made in Sodom, or

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Visitors — We pray that you benefit spiritually from our worship together and hope to see you again.

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maybe it was because of the pleasures of sin that she had experienced there. Whatever the reason was, she looked back and disobeyed God's command not to look back. God wanted Lot and his family to forget the wicked city of Sodom and move on, not looking back. When Lot's wife looked back, she looked upon the wickedness that God was to destroy. For whatever the reason, she was still somewhat attached to the wicked city, because she looked back. God turned her into a pillar of salt. We cannot remain attached to the world and follow Christ at the same time. If we are to follow Christ, we must detach ourselves from who we were and press on!

Paul had a wicked past, one that he was ashamed of; but instead of dwelling upon who he was, he says in Philippians 3:13-14, *"Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."* We, like Paul, may have a wicked past that we are ashamed of, or we may be like Lot's wife — too attached to our past to follow God. Since the way to Heaven is a straight and narrow path. We cannot risk looking back at who we were. When we do, we put ourselves at great risk of losing sight of our goal and missing an eternity spent with God in heaven. Don't look back!

Does Jesus Care?

By Kyle Campbell

Sometimes it gets kind of hard to believe that Jesus Christ, the Son of God and Creator of the universe, cares about us. But the Bible repeatedly affirms that He cares for His people. He had compassion on people when they needed teaching (Matthew 9:36), healing (Matthew 14:14), and something to eat (Matthew 15:32). Furthermore, He loved those who were close to Him and those who were close to the truth (John 11:5; Mark 10:21).

It is comforting to know that Jesus cares about our physical needs, but it is even more reassuring to know that He cares for us spiritually (Ephesians 1:3). Romans 5:8 says, *"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."* Does Jesus care? Oh yes, He cares. His heart is touched with my grief!



***He who guards his mouth preserves his life,
But he who opens wide his lips shall have destruction.***

— Proverbs 13:3

“My Sheep Hear My Voice”

By Steven F. Deaton

Jesus said, “*My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me*” (Jn. 10:27). The force of this statement is that only those who “hear” the voice of Jesus and “follow” Him are of His fold, His flock. Only those who heed the commands of the Lamb can rightfully claim to be His sheep. Therefore, it stands to reason, those who do not “hear” the voice of Jesus or do not “follow” Him, are not of His fold or flock.

Many people want to claim to be a part of the flock of God, they want to claim Jesus as the Shepherd of their lives, yet they are unwilling to truly “hear” the Lord. They hear and do not (Jas. 1:21-25). This is well illustrated by the wise and foolish in Matthew 7:24-27. One man heard and did what Jesus said — he was declared wise. The other man heard and did not do what Jesus said — he was declared foolish. When we read these passages, we all agree. Our friends and neighbors agree. However, not all of us apply it, otherwise there would be unity among those who seek to follow the Savior.

Let us look at an “ancient” problem among the disciples to show how some “heard” the voice of the Lord, but did not follow it.

In the first century church there was a big problem over circumcision.

There were converted Jews who insisted that Gentiles must be circumcised (Acts 15:1, 5). The issue was debated and forever settled for those willing to submit to the voice of the Lord — Gentiles did not need to be circumcised (Acts 15:7-29). However, in spite of Christ’s will revealed through the Holy Spirit, there were men who pressed the issue (Phil. 3:1-3). They had “heard” the voice of Christ, but “listened” to Moses instead.

Now, let us look at some “modern” day issues where people “hear” but do not “follow” the voice of the Shepherd.

Music: The voice of the Shepherd, via His ambassador, declared long ago that music in worship was to be by “speaking,” “teaching and admonishing” (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). Many will read such passages and ignore them. Rather than follow the voice of the Lord, they turn to Moses or David in an attempt to justify their instruments in worship. What do you think of that? Should we listen to Jesus or Moses?

The Lord’s Supper: The Lamb of God instituted the memorial feast of His death on the night of His betrayal (Matt. 26:26-29). His followers were to observe this feast. Later, in Acts, we find that they did observe it (Acts 2:42). We learn that they observed it upon the first day of the week (Acts 20:7). They obviously “heard” the voice of Jesus and followed Him. In contrast to this, there are men who

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hear these commands, but say that the Lord's supper can be observed on Saturday or Thursday or whenever. Many do not practice a first-day-of-the-week partaking of the communion, but a once-a-month, once-a-quarter, or once-a-year observance. What do you think, dear reader? Should we listen to Jesus or men?

Marriage, Divorce, & Remarriage: Jesus, the loving Shepherd, declared that a man cannot put away his wife and marry another unless she is guilty of fornication, sexual immorality (Matt. 19:9). Men will read this, "hear" Jesus, but then do what they desire. They will put away their wife because they are "unhappy" or they have "fallen out of love." To tickle these itching ears, there is a host of preachers who will attempt to explain away the Lamb's command. They will say a man can divorce and remarry for as many times as he pleases, for any reason, be baptized, and remain with his current wife. Friend, what do you think? Should we listen to Jesus or our "feelings" and false teachers?

Remember, the Shepherd said, "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple" (Lk. 14:26). Will you "hear" the good Shepherd or someone else?

March Birthdays:

The 18th Amy Hisaw

The 25th Megan Morgan.

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Sunday

Bible Study . . . 9:30 A.M.

Worship 10:30 A.M.

Worship 5:00 P.M.

Wednesday

Bible Study . . . 7:00 P.M.

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