

February 21, 2021

Viewpoint from the Valley Grove Church Of Christ

Let The Dead Bury The Dead

By Mike Thomas

There are times when Jesus' teaching appeared heartless and uncompassionate yet were filled with love and profound insight. This was the case when He responded to a man who asked for permission to go bury his father. Jesus said, *"Follow Me, and let the dead bury their own dead"* (Matthew 8:22). What did our Lord imply in that statement?

Obviously, Jesus neither forbade funerals nor did He consider it a loss of faith to mourn the passing of a loved one. One of the most popular verses in the Bible is *"Jesus wept"* (John 11:35), which occurred when His friend Lazarus died. Lazarus' sister, Mary, was having an especially hard time, which *"when Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her weeping, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled"* (verse 33). The Son of Man was (and still is) moved with compassion by the suffering and emptiness that death brings us.

The point Jesus was making regarding burying the dead was that nothing is to come before following Him, not even human relationships. It is likely the man's father had not yet died, but would eventually, and the man was putting off following Jesus until that occurred. If so, it shows how people will let the slightest excuse keep them from obeying Jesus. There is always one more thing to do before giving their lives to the Lord; always one more matter to take care of before becoming a faithful Christian. "I'll go back to church when I don't have to care for my family." "I'll put the Lord first when I am older." "I'll obey the gospel after I quit this job." "I'll start studying the Bible again after ball season." On and on the excuses flow, but that "day" of obedience never comes. There is always something more important coming up. Furthermore, they have convinced themselves that intending to serve God is just as good as actually serving Him, which is a lie. The prophet Samuel made that clear when he told a disobedient king (who thought he could disobey God as long as he made up for it in valuable offerings), *"Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have*

(Continued on page 2)

rejected the word of the Lord, He also has rejected you from being king” (1 Samuel 15:22-23).

The sad reality is most people are dead spiritually and will remain that way forever, which is why Jesus said to let the dead bury the dead. They are “dead” while they live because of their devotion to sinful pleasure (1 Timothy 5:6). Consequently, everything they do in life, even as profound as burying a loved one, is of little significance and value. All of those “important” matters that had to be done will evaporate into oblivion when compared to eternity. Or as Jesus asked, *“For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?”* (Mark 8:36) Unfortunately, most people will not realize that truth until they depart from this life — when it is too late to change (2 Corinthians 5:10).

Dear friend, be wise and find spiritual life today while you still *“walk before the Lord in the land of the living”* (Psalm 116:9). The day is coming when your time to repent will be taken from you. If you have not obeyed the gospel, you are still in sin and separated from Him (Acts 2:36-41). If you are a Christian in rebellion, you are bound by iniquity until you repent, pray, and confess to God (Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:9). Today is the day He has given you to walk by faith in Him. What in the world could be more important than finding eternal life? If Jesus would not let a man use the excuse of a funeral to keep him from obeying God, what could possibly be so important in your life to justify your disobedience?

Hate Your Father And Mother!

By Keith Sharp

Why do you attend the church of which you are a member? Is it because your father and mother before you were members of that church? Is it because your husband or wife belongs to that particular religious body? What if Christ, through His Word, the New Testament, demanded one thing, and the church of your family said to do something else? Whom would you follow?

Jesus declared: *“If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple”* (Luke 14:26). Does this mean I must literally despise the father who provided my needs when I was helpless and gave me the teaching and guidance to become a Christian? Must I turn against my mother who endangered her own life to bring me into this world and selflessly nursed and cared for me in childhood? Must I forsake my own wife who left a secure

(Continued on page 3)

home to be my companion and bear my children? Must I loathe my little ones, any one of whom I would readily lay down my own life to protect? Must I hate my very own brother in the flesh who was my constant companion as a child? Of course the Bible demands the exact opposite attitude toward my own family. In fact, no son ever demonstrated greater love for his mother than did the Son of Mary, Who, while in the agony of impending death, made provision for the care of His mother after He was gone (John 19:26, 27).

What, then, is the meaning of this condition of discipleship? In Genesis 29:30 the inspired writer Moses observed of Jacob, *“he loved also Rachel more than Leah.”* Moses then declared, *“the Lord saw that Leah was hated”* (verse 31). Leah was *“hated”* in that she was loved less than was Rachel. This is precisely the sense in which we are to hate our families. As Jesus warned: *“He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me”* (Matthew 10:37).

When John F. Kennedy was running for President, he stated that his religion was a part of his family heritage and that he could no more give up Roman Catholicism than he could his Irish ancestry. But Jesus Christ warned that if you do not love Him more than you love father, mother, wife, children, brothers and sisters, you cannot be His disciple. One proves his love for Christ by obeying Him (John 14:15). If you follow the religion of your family in disregard to the Word of Christ, you are not a disciple of Christ.

My People Are Destroyed For A Lack Of Knowledge

By Jesse Flowers

“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for Me; because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children” (Hosea 4:6).

What about God’s people today? Are we also destroyed for a lack of knowledge? Can we recite all 66 books of the Bible with relative ease? Can we navigate our way around the Scriptures, without “cheating” by glancing at the table of contents? Do we possess a knowledge of God’s Word where we can share the gospel with the lost, and show them in the New Testament? Can you teach (and show) others what the Bible teaches on the subject of baptism, worship, marriage/divorce/remarriage, what happens when we die, heaven & hell, etc.? If not, why not?

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

Sadly, many in the world are Biblically illiterate (lack Bible knowledge), but how many in the Lord's Church are as well? Do you know what the simple cure for Biblical illiteracy is? Read the Bible! Study to show thyself approved unto God (2 Tim. 2:15). Give attention to reading (1 Tim. 4:13). Hunger and thirst for the righteousness of God's Word (Matt. 5:6). Meditate in His law day and night (Ps. 1:2). May it never be true of you, your family, or your congregation — that you are destroyed for lack of knowledge!



Every word of God *is* pure; He *is* a shield to those who put their trust in Him. Do not add to His words, Lest He rebuke you, and you be found a liar.

— *Proverbs 30:5-6*

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

Study Your Bible

February Birthdays:

The 1st Roseanna Carter; The 6th Jay Stewart; The 11th Mary Lynn McCartney; The 16th Tommy Reynolds; The 17th Austin Hisaw; The 20th Shirley Pike; The 22nd Peggy Thomas; The 25th Don Haynes

Postage
Stamp

Valley Grove Church Of Christ
2110 East Stateline Road
P. O. Box 461
Southaven, MS 38671

This Bulletin is a weekly publication of the Valley Grove Church Of Christ, Southaven, MS

Sunday
Bible Study . . . 9:30 A.M.
Worship 10:30 A.M.
Worship 5:00 P.M.

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

Phone: 662-342-1132
www.valleygrovechurchofchrist.com