

The Bulletin

Meeks St. Church of Christ

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September 12, 2021

“Bearing A Different Gospel Beautifully”

By Matthew W. Bassford

The apostle Paul was fond of sarcasm, not because he didn't love people, but because he did. When Christians he had converted turned aside from Christ, it drove him to distraction, and that distraction often found its expression in heartfelt exasperation.



One such expression appears in II Corinthians 11:4. In contrast to the stubborn resistance the Corinthians put up to Paul's teaching, they listened eagerly to the false teachers who followed him. Paul tells them that they bore a different gospel beautifully, implying that the attention they devoted to the workers of deceit was the attention they should have devoted to him.

Today, there are far too many Christians who bear a different gospel beautifully, and it is entirely understandable that they should do so. In the sense of I Corinthians 2:14, the gospel is unnatural. It does two things in particular that humans don't like. It demands that we do hard things ourselves, and it keeps us from adopting easy workarounds. When a different gospel diminishes the former and permits the latter, we tend to bear it beautifully.

To see how this works, let's pick a simple example: hospitality. The Bible commands us to be hospitable, a sacred tradition that stretches back to the days of Abraham if not earlier. Hebrews 13:2 tells us that we should follow Abraham's example because he entertained angels without knowing it. This refers, I think, not only to the possibility of supernatural visitors but also to the impact that hospitality can have both on others and on us.

Hospitality reveals the generosity and kindness of Christ. As we practice hospitality, we become more like Him. It surely is a part of walking in a manner worthy of the gospel! However, there's a problem. Hospitality is hard. It goes against the grain of our culture. Either we invest a lot of time in cleaning up and preparing a nice meal, or we expose our messy fast-food reality. We might even have to invite over a rampaging mob of church kids. Not surprisingly, many modern-day Christians struggle to show hospitality.

There are two solutions to this problem. Either we do better at hospitality ourselves (still hard), or we outsource hospitality to the church. The latter is much more appealing. Sustaining that fellowship hall at the church building will cost some money, but we have more money than time. We drop a check in the plate, and we never have to open our home to anybody again.

As elegant as this solution seems, there are issues with it. First, it's different. First-century Christians were in the hospitality business, but the first-century church wasn't. Second, the fellowship halls, gyms, and so forth might produce hospitality of a sort, but they don't produce a congregation of hospitable Christians. Anything that subverts the gospel goal of godliness is hostile to it.

Walking in the ancient paths is difficult and frustrating. We are inclined to Americanize our faith by departing from it in ways that seem good to the wisdom of our time. Consequently, the words of the agents of change often fall on receptive ears.

However, we do better to consider the wisdom of the One who laid out those ancient paths in the first place. His ways are not our ways, and He always has reasons for His commandments and His silence, even if those reasons are not apparent to us. Rather than bearing a different gospel, we should strive instead to bear our cross.

“The Trilingual Inscription”

By Jarrod M. Jacobs

The inscription or charge made by Pilate concerning Jesus does not get much attention. Yet, this event and this charge make a profound impact upon Bible history. Whether or not Pilate realized all the ramifications of what he was saying, we today can appreciate the truth behind the statement.

We read about the written charge or accusation made against Christ at His crucifixion four times in Scripture. This statement, well-known to most, was nailed above Him while He hung on the cross (Matt. 27:37; Mk. 15:26; Lk. 23:38; Jn. 19:19). This statement said that “Jesus the King of the Jews” was being crucified this day. While the chief priests protested this statement, Pilate stood firm on this decision, saying, “*What I have written, I have written*” (Jn. 19:21-22).

In studying this event, we see that Luke and John tell us that Pilate wrote the inscription or accusation in three languages, Hebrew, Greek, and Latin (Lk. 23:38; Jn. 19:20). This is significant, for regardless of who might have been present that day, those who looked at Christ on the cross could have read the title above him.

Even more significant is the fact that each language used reflected a deeper truth about Christ. For example, the Hebrew language was the language of revelation. God’s specific authority had come through the Hebrews up to the days of Malachi. Thus, if folks wished to know about God’s will and read the prophecies of the coming Messiah, they would undoubtedly recognize that the Hebrew people had written these facts down.

The Greek language was the language of the philosophers and “great thinkers” of the day, such as Plato, Aristotle, and others. This would have been an established fact. Were you aware that Paul would sometimes quote from Epimenides, Euripides, Menander, and others who were known among the Greeks in his preaching (Acts 17:28; Rom. 7:19; I Cor. 15:33; Titus 1:12; etc.)? This doesn’t mean these men were inspired by God, but Paul was (I Cor. 7:40, 14:37; II Pet. 3:15-16), and apparently, the Holy Spirit considered their teachings reflecting the same philosophy we see in the Scriptures!

Finally, the Latin language was the language of government and civil power. This is the language Caesar and Pilate spoke as well as the others within the Roman government. Thus, the people who saw Christ on the cross who were connected with Rome would read this inscription, and no doubt, it would give them pause that this person was called “King of the Jews” when they considered their king to be living in Rome!

Therefore, such a writing was a worldwide announcement! When we look to the cross with our mind’s eye, we see a Suffering Savior who was announced as “*King of the Jews*” to all nations.

In truth, we see that Pilate’s accusation had a greater meaning than perhaps even he realized. From the standpoint of “revelation,” we see that Christ being the Word (Jn. 1:1) means that He is God’s revelation. In “*times past*,” God spoke to men in various ways but now speaks to us through his Son (Heb. 1:1-2). He reveals God’s word to us every time we read His words!

Next, in thinking about the subject of philosophy, we know that Christ can discern the uttermost thoughts of men’s hearts (Jn. 2:24-25, 6:64). This makes Him greater than any philosopher. His teaching is the greatest “philosophy” ever to grace the hearts of men!

Finally, when we think about the subject of the law, we see Jesus as the lawgiver (Jas. 4:12; Gal. 6:2). He is the greatest lawgiver of all because He revealed “*the perfect law of liberty*” (Jas. 1:25) to man! What He has stated will lead us to Heaven. No one before or since has been able to accomplish or give as much as Christ.

Pilate may not have realized how true and far-reaching his words were when he wrote the accusation that was placed above Christ on the cross. Yet, the statement was true then and is still true today! Today, we who became Christians had our sins forgiven when we accepted His terms of salvation (Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38; etc.). At the same

time, we who are His children are the recipients of God's blessings (Eph. 1:3) when we listen to the revelation, apply His true philosophies, and obey His law (Eph. 3:4; Rev. 1:5, 22:14)! If we want to have salvation from sins and look forward to an eternal life in Heaven, let us stop rejecting the Lord. Let us follow what the Lord says unconditionally, knowing that He is the One who possesses all authority "*in heaven and in earth*" (Matt. 28:18; Col. 3:17). He is our king (Rev. 17:14, 19:16; I Tim. 6:15), and wants us in Heaven with Him.

Luke 13:24 (NKJB)

"Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able."



"Remembering 9/11"

By Mike Davis

It was a Tuesday morning. For unremembered reasons, I was still at home at 8:00 that morning and was watching NBC news. Still taking my time, I was getting ready to leave for Bloomington when I heard Matt Laurer and Katie Couric, stunned and stammering, announce the crashing of an airplane into one of the Twin Towers. Stunned, I stayed at home, watching the news, for another hour or so, and in that time, witnessed the second crashing of a hijacked airplane crash into the second tower. I had to go to work, and at that time, knowing nothing about how to watch the news on my computer, I kept the radio tuned to the news. My mother called just as I arrived at the church building and was crying in fear. "What's happening? I don't understand! Is this the end of the world?" I tried to calm her, but being 300 miles away and having only the phone to use, calming Mom wasn't easy.

I assured her this was not the end of the world (1 Cor. 15:52) but was an attack on our country. She was only fourteen when Japan attacked Pearl Harbor. She remembered her fear from that time; this was worse! Within the next two hours, two more terrorist attacks and the collapse of the Twin Towers would change our world forever!

For several months following 9-11-01, churches of Christ saw tremendous growth in attendance. Unfortunately, it was short-lived. Apparently, the shock and awe of these attacks became more "matter of fact" than the warning to prepare to meet thy God (Amos 4:12). How I pray it will not require another 9-11 to awaken the souls of men and women to the obedience of the gospel – but how I also realize the greatest growth of the Lord's church has been during extreme persecution (see Acts through Revelation.) Then again, God has given us all the warnings He intends to give us through His word. Will man ever learn to fear God and keep HIS commandments? I pray so!

I muse on how surreal the occasion of 9-11-01 remains; and how shocking it is to our youthful ones who see the video of this truth for the first time! But I muse more on the reality of hundreds of souls who seemingly express no fear, no preparedness, no concern for the Lord's return (Revelation 1:7; Hebrews 9:28; et al.). Maybe it's because there is no video of such an event. There was fair warning of 9-11, and few took it seriously until after its fruition.

Friend, there'll be no video of the Lord's return! We've been warned, and we've been granted time to prepare. Once that day comes (Acts 17:31), it will transpire with such speed and accuracy that we'll immediately know if the Lord said to us, "Come ye blessed," or "Depart ye cursed." Therefore, I continue to muse on the lessons learned from 9-11 and even more from the reading, studying, and acceptance of God's truth.

Let's be ready for His return!

News and Notes: Sick and recovering: Tim Harris Sr, Tim Harris Jr, Chad Harris, June Lawson (Lisa Busby's Mom), Debbie Keplinger, Janis Johnson, Daniel Holloway, Betty Hurst, Peggy Harville (cancer), Linda Hunt, David Taylor, Randy Beaty, Sam Johnson, Sherry Doles, Mrs. Jennie Daniel (Dan and Lynlie's neighbor), Anna Hearn, Randy Ferrell, J F Dancer, & Earl Mitchell. Kevin Hays (Ky friend who asked for prayers), Clois and Estell Wright both are in Booneville Hospital with Covid. The Meade Family are quarantined until the 19th.

Those Who Serve:

Sunday Morning 9:00 A.M. Service:

Opening Prayer: Russel Briggs
Preaching: Russell Briggs
Sermon #1: "A Textual Study of Matthew 1-4"

Auditorium Bible Class: 9:35am:

Jerry Kennemur
1 Corinthians (Mike Willis)
Page #60, Question #7

Sunday Morning 10:30 A.M. Service:

Announcements: Paul Johnson
Opening Prayer & Scripture Reading: Lee Busby
Psalm 2: 1-6
Song Leader: Paul Busby
Lord's Supper: Jerry Kennemur
Assisting: — —
Singing Service: *Men of the Congregation Lead Singing*
Invitation: To Be Chosen
Closing Prayer: Tim Harris Jr.

Wednesday Evening: 7:00 P.M.
September 15th:

Auditorium Bible Class: Paul Johnson
Ecclesiastes & Song of Solomon (Mike Willis)
Page #24, Question #11
Invitation: Russell Briggs
Song Leader: Dan Cottrell
Closing Prayer: Paul Busby



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