

# The Bulletin

## Meeks Street Church of Christ

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**December 17, 2023**

### ***“Narrow-Mindedness”***

By Luther Blackmon

Do not feel insulted when someone tells you that your religion is narrow. Maybe he is right. If he is right, you should feel complimented. Your critic may be confusing narrowness with bigotry, in which case he is the one out of step, not you. Bigotry the Lord condemned; narrowness (in the scriptural use of the term) he commended: "...narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be which find it."



### **The Narrowness of Truth**

Truth is always narrow. Five plus five equals ten; this is true from kindergarten to college and everywhere else in the world. It isn't ten because the arithmetic book says so, but it is ten because it cannot be anything else. If in a class of 100 students, only one gave ten as the answer to five plus five and all the other 99 agreed on a different answer, the one would be right and all the others wrong.

Historical truth is narrow. The Battle of San Jacinto was fought in Texas; Valley Forge was in Pennsylvania. These are facts which are understood alike by all students of history. If a student in a history class gave any other answer concerning the location of these spots, he would be incorrect. No one would think the teacher was "narrow" in telling him so.

There are twelve inches in a foot, three feet in a yard all over the world. It doesn't matter whether the one doing the measuring is a president or a preacher, an illiterate hill-billy or a college professor. To fail to recognize these facts would throw the world into hopeless confusion.

### **Religious Truth**

Since truth in every other field is narrow and dogmatic, why should we suppose that divine truth is so flexible as to be susceptible of any interpretation man wants to place upon it? "We just can't see it alike," someone answers. But we see other things alike. Is man more able to make himself understood than is God? We may misunderstand the meaning of a passage of scripture, but does our misunderstanding of it change the meaning of the passage? Does its meaning change and shift to suit our various understandings of it? If the writer of the passage meant to teach something when he wrote the passage, is not that 'something' that he intended still in the passage?

Take, for example, the much discussed passage, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16). The question about this passage is whether Jesus did, or did not, make baptism necessary to salvation. He either did, or he didn't. Some of us believe that he did; others vehemently deny it. It must be apparent to all that somebody is teaching false doctrine on this point. Is it broadminded to ignore these contradictions and pretend they do not exist? Baptists and Presbyterians teach that a child of God cannot fall away from the favor of God and be lost; Methodists teach that he can fall away and be lost. Does the Bible teach both?

Now if we are to escape the stigma of being called "narrow," we must cooperate with and encourage the man who is teaching the very opposite of what we believe to be the truth. Is this honesty? If one preacher preached four conflicting doctrines, people would call him a hypocrite; but if four preachers preach four conflicting doctrines, they are all supposedly teaching the truth!

## How Broad Should We Be?

The Unitarian believes that Jesus of Nazareth was a great man and a great teacher, but that he was not the Son of God. The Orthodox Jew worships God, but denies the divinity of Jesus. Shall we have these men in our fellowship? If honesty and sincerity are the only criteria, why not? Who will say they are not as honest as we are? Some denominational preachers are already taking this position. They swap pulpits with Jewish rabbis right along. This shocks the religious sensibilities in the world but it is the legitimate and inevitable fruit of that 'anything-and-anybody-is-right' attitude that we are talking about.

Most members of denominations are not ready yet to take in the Jews and the Unitarians on their broadminded position. They narrow it down a bit. We must believe in Christ, they say; we must see alike on those scriptures that teach that Jesus was the Son of God; that he was born of a virgin; that he suffered vicariously; that he arose from the dead; that he ascended into heaven, where he intercedes for us. But why must we see alike on those particular passages, but have unbounded liberty to differ on nearly everything else connected with the religion of Christ? Are not the passages pertaining to the organization of the church, baptism, apostasy, worship, church membership, discipline, authority, etc., inspired of God as much as are the other passages? Are not these things a part of the Lord's plan? Have they not place with divine truth? How much truth is essential, and how much is non-essential? How much of the Bible is important, and how much is unimportant?

We feel no personal animosity, of course, toward those who teach things we do not believe; but we cannot, with a good conscience, bid them Godspeed. John said, "If there come any unto you and bring not this doctrine, received him not into your house; neither bid him Godspeed: For he that biddeth him Godspeed is partaker of his evil deeds" (2 John 10). Paul said, "If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed" (Galatians 1:9). These apostles thought it was a matter of much import what a man believed and taught.

We are not infallible, and we are open to any truth that may be presented to us; we will change when convinced we are wrong. But two things we do know, and of them we are certain: (1) truth does not contradict truth, and (2) we will not learn by hiding our heads in the sand and refusing to admit that religious divisions exist, or that such are wrong.

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## "HOW WE SHOULD TREAT OUR ENEMIES"

By John Hines

What does the bible say about how we should treat our enemies? It does not say we do not have enemies, that is for sure. "Woe to you when all men speak well of you..." (Lk 6:26). A man who has no enemies has never dared to stand up for what is right. The Lord had enemies and if we walk by faith, we will too. So how do we treat them? Look at Matt 5:44-48.

**"Love your enemies."** There are not many commandments that are more difficult than this. The temptation is to retaliate, to avenge ourselves upon our enemies, but that is not what we are called to do. We are called to love those who are undeserving of our love. We are called to be agents of grace, agents of giving undeserved favor. What does it look like?

**"Bless them that curse you."** This is not "pray for them". We will get to that in a moment. This means "to speak well of them". Do not partake in gossip and slander of your enemies. Do not be antagonistic towards them just for the sake of it. Certainly, if they are sinning, they need rebuked, but even that, and especially that, would be a blessing to them. Bless them.

**"Do good to them that hate you."** Put love into action. Put faith into works. Do not just love in word, but love in deed. How many enemies would be enemies no more if they would learn this simplest of lessons! Speak well of them and do them good. Do not reserve your doing of good for family and friends only. Consider those who are enemies as well!

**"Pray for them..."** Go to God in prayer for them. Ask the Lord's blessings upon them. Pray the Lord be with them. Pray what you wish for yourself, upon them! Can a man curse his enemy after he has approached the throne of God, for his enemy? It sure is difficult, if not impossible. Pray for them. They are enemies for a reason, but you follow the Lord, and you are doing everything you can to get that person to follow the Lord too!

The Lord "sends the rain on the just and the unjust" our passage says. He blesses the wheat and tare, both the good and evil. Why? Because He is longsuffering "not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet 3:9). The Lord is working to reconcile His enemies back to Himself. As we are a part of that working, we are "sons of our Father in heaven". We strive to be just like Him. Do you have enemies? Were you ever the Lord's enemy? How did He treat you? Do the same.

**News and Notes:**

Sick and recovering: Tim Harris Sr, Tim Harris Jr, Daniel Holloway, Debbie Keplinger, Robbie, Sheila, Sherry Doles, Sandi Poole, Nathan Cox, Sandra Oliver, Chad Harris, Eli Johnson, Burt Ward, Jamie Jones, Fred Johnson, Mary Ann Holley, Robert Howard, Billy Grisham, and Lynlie Cottrell.

**Those Who Serve:**

**Sunday Morning 9:00 A.M. Service:**

**Opening Prayer:** Adam Harris  
**Preaching:** Brian Meade  
**Sermon #1:** "How Do We Demonstrate Love To Others?"

**Auditorium Bible Class: 9:35am:**

**Workbook:** Fred Johnson  
1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon  
**Author:** Herschel Patton  
**Starting Page & Question:** Page #17, Question #5

**Sunday Morning 10:30 A.M. Service:**

**Announcements:** Paul Johnson  
**Opening Prayer & Scripture Reading:** Russell Briggs  
**Scripture Reading:** 1 Peter 1:13-17  
**Song Leader:** Jerry Kennemur  
**Lord's Supper:** Paul Busby  
**Assisting:** — —  
**Preaching:** Brian Meade  
**Sermon #2:** "The Journey Of Life"  
**Closing Prayer:** Danny Sheffield

**Wednesday Evening: 7:00 P.M.**

**December 20, 2023**

**Auditorium Bible Class:** Paul Busby  
**Workbook:** Preparing To Teach Our Neighbors  
**Author:** Max Tice  
**Starting Page & Question:** Page #74, Question #3  
**Invitation:** Dan Cottrell  
**Song Leader:** Brian Meade  
**Closing Prayer:** Blake Briggs

# ***“How Do We Demonstrate Love To Others?”***

Lesson Text: **1 John 3:18.**

## **I. What Is Love?**

- **1 Corinthians 13:4-8.**
- Love Is Kindness In Action. **1 Corinthians 13:4.**
- Love Is Seeking The Best For Someone.
- Love Values Everyone! **John 3:16; 1 John 2:2.**
- Love Makes Sacrifices- **John 15:13.**

## **II. How Do We Demonstrate Love To Our Neighbors?**

- Doing Good— Not Evil— To Them. **Romans 13:10; Galatians 6:10.**
- Help Them When They Have Need. **Luke 10:29-37. (36-37).**
- Teach Them The Gospel. **Romans 15:2; Ephesians 4:25; Romans 1:14-16.**
- Reprove And Rebuke Sinful Behavior. **Proverbs 9:8; 27:5.**
- Pray For Their Salvation- **Romans 10:1.**

## **III. How Do We Demonstrate Love To Our Spouse?**

- Show Kindness Everyday! **1 Corinthians 13:4; Colossians 3:19.**
- Let Them Know By Your Actions That You Love Them!
  1. Words Of Affirmation (Compliments).
  2. Quality Time.
  3. Gifts.
  4. Acts Of Service.
  5. Physical Touch.
- Seek Their Needs And Fulfill Them- **Ephesians 5:28-29.**
- Forgive and Forget The Past. **Proverbs 17:9.**
- Pray For Them Everyday! **1 Peter 3:7.**

## **IV. How Do We Demonstrate Love To Our Church Family?**

- Be There At The Assemblies and Fully Participate! **1 Corinthians 11:33.**
- Help Them When They Have A Need. **1 John 3:16-17.**
- Reprove And Rebuke Sinful Behavior. **Galatians 2:11; Luke 17:3.**
- Be Kind And Considerate Of Brethren. **Ephesians 4:32.**
- Pray For Them Everyday! **1 Thessalonians 5:25; 2 Thessalonians 1:11.**

# ***“The Journey Of Life”***

Lesson Text: **1 Peter 1:13-17.**

## **I. Life As A Journey And Our Destination.**

- The Bible Describes Our Life:
  - As A Race- **Hebrews 12:1; 2 Timothy 4:7.**
  - Going Down Pathways & Roads- **Proverbs 4:26; Isaiah 35:8; Matt. 7:13-14.**
  - Paul Compares It To The Journey To The Promised Land- **1 Cor. 10:1-5.**
  - There Are Obstacles & Enemies Along The Path- **1 Cor. 10:13; 1 Peter 5:8.**
  - We Must Prepare For The Journey- **1 Peter 1:13.**
  - The Same Journey For All Of Us- **John 10:27; 2 Cor. 5:7; Philippians 3:16.**
- We Journey Toward Our Final Destination: Heaven Or Hell- **Matthew 25:46.**

## **II. Journeying With Or Without God.**

- It Is A Choice We Make Everyday- **Psalm 14:1; Joshua 24:15; Matt. 11:28-30.**
- The Ephesians Made The Right Choice- **Ephesians 2:1-6; 12-13.**
- **Proverbs 4: 14-19.**
- Journeying With God In **Hebrews 13:11; Ephesians 6:10-12.**

## **III. What We Gain By Journeying With God.**

- Fellowship With God-
  - **Hebrews 12:1**- Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Peter, James...
- God’s Help, Protection, & Providence- **Hebrews 2:18.** Joseph, Esther,
- All Spiritual Blessings- **Ephesians 1:3; 1 Peter 3:12-13.**
- Salvation From Sins- **Colossians 1:14.**
- A Life Anchored In Hope- **Hebrews 6:19.**

## **IV. What We Give Up By Journeying Without God.**

- Fellowship With God- Adam And Eve, Cain, **Romans 1:21-26.**
- God’s Help, Protection, And Providence- Samson (**Judges 16:20**), King Saul (**1 Samuel 18:12**), King Ahab, King Jehoram...
  - **Hebrews 6:4-6.**
- All Spiritual Blessings- **John 15:6.**
- Salvation From Sins- **Hebrews 10:26-31.**
- A Life Anchored In Hope- **Ephesians 2:12.**