

The Bulletin

Meeks St. Church of Christ

1201 Meeks St. Corinth, Ms. 38834

Phone – (662) 287-2187

Churchatcorinth.com

MeeksstreetchurchofChrist.com

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“What I Should Have Said— But Didn’t”

By Brian Meade

1 Peter 3:15 tells us, “*but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence.*” The admonition is to be ready always to defend and tell others why you believe and hope in God. This can cover quite a bit of topics of our faith, or regarding “*the faith,*” as Jude verse 3 makes reference to a system of belief. Paul would even say in Acts 23:6, *Brethren, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees; I am on trial for the hope and resurrection of the dead!*” (The resurrection was the debate)

But How often have you been confronted with a Bible subject or argument to which you could not give an answer? If you’re a new convert, this might understandably happen more often than not. But if you’ve been a Christian for some time, not knowing the answer to a Bible question might be a cause for shame. And it might cause you to turn away and avoid such situations. But the Christian should not, and cannot, shy away from such discussions; quite the opposite— we should be eager to take part in conversations in which the Bible is the main topic of interest.

Instead of discussing the Bible for themselves, some Christians seek out someone in the church whom they believe to be more knowledgeable of the Scriptures, and that is usually the preacher or one of the elders. They then, either send that person to answer the questions or they get the answers and relay them later. Again, this may be fine for new converts, but we as older Christians ought to know how to answer or defend the truth ourselves. We need to see the need to strengthen *our* knowledge of the Bible, so we can uphold the truth.

Now before you think I have always known every right word to tear down the tenants of Calvinism (or any other false doctrines), I want to say that I have not! There have been times when I have had to seek counsel and ask others about a particular point of argumentation that I did not know how to answer with great confidence. And there have been times that I have left a Bible discussion and the words that I needed came later— and only after careful review of what was said and how it would be inconsistent with truth. I have had a few of those, “*What I should have said— but didn’t*” moments due to inexperience and lack of studying how others attempt to defend error (not justifiably, of course). But we need to make it our goal to learn and stand on our own.

As you may find out in Bible discussions, there are some who can present error in a very convincing fashion (until you examine it very carefully). But the problem with that is, how do you carefully examine an argument that you have just heard for the first time? Take for instance the “*Psallo argument*” (used by those who want to use instruments of music in the church today) can be tricky to deal with if you have never heard it before. There are also the arguments used about the word “*for*” (*eis*, in the Greek) in Acts 2:38 to try to make it “*because of*” and dodge the real purpose and meaning of baptism into Christ (Gal. 3:27; Acts 22:16). Some try to go to Matthew 12:41, where they say that *eis* (*for* in Acts 2:38) can only mean that the Ninevites repented *because* of the preaching of Jonah. Or what do we say to those who bring up the “*thief on the cross*” as an example of New Testament conversion? Or how do we handle arguments for the “*Realized Eschatology,*” which is also known as the *70 AD Doctrine*? This erroneous doctrine basically teaches that the Judgment Day was at the time of the destruction of



Jerusalem in AD 70. Sounds pretty far-fetched until you hear some of their arguments for such reasoning. The holes in this doctrine are there to find, but do we know where to look? I believe Peter has the answer to these questions in I Peter 3:15,

[1] *“but sanctify Christ as Lord in our hearts”*

This would include getting to know all about our Savior and what He teaches in the Scriptures. We need to internalize the truth so well, that we can spot what doesn't fit into the teachings of Christ. Bible studies are the key to growth in the truth; and in this process, we will need lessons on the truth and lessons that expose the error that is taught by men (2 Corinthians 10:5; Ephesians 6:10-17). Sadly, some will fight against it when both sides (truth as well as error) are discussed in Bible studies.

[2] *“always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you....”*

God's word is telling us to be in constant state of readiness and prepared to speak when the occasion calls for us to defend our belief in Christ. I once heard of a brother in the church that wanted to know the plan of salvation so well—that if he was called in the middle of the night from a deep sleep—he would be ready to teach it without any hindrance. To be ready always requires intentional planning and focus on what others teach and why. The more we know, the better we are ready to defend truth. And in this passage, the Greek word for “defense” comes from the word in which we get the word apologetics. Apologetics are basically the study of how to defend the doctrine we hold as truth. There are some good books out there that I would recommend, such as *“Answering Religious Error”* by John Isaac Edwards, *“Answers For Our Hope”* by Marshall E. Patton, and *“Ask and the Bible Answers”* by Jimmy Thomas, are just a few books that have helped me in my studies of how to answer general errors. There are a lot of books more specifically devoted to just one particular false belief and will thus cover more ground.

[3] *“yet with gentleness and reverence.”*

How we answer error does matter. We cannot be arrogant or haughty in our defense of truth. In order to effectively defend and convince others of truth, we should not forget to be polite, loving, and interested in the souls with whom we are teaching. This will require a lot of patience and consideration, as we deal with those who oppose truth in gentleness. Ephesians 4:11-15 discusses our growing process of knowledge that has in view to be Christ-like and *“speaking the truth in love.”*

Free Home
**BIBLE
STUDY**

A Women's Bible Class

will meet monthly at Mico, TN. at the home of
Chris and Kathryn Callahan the 3rd Thursday of
the Month

“Acting on the Evidence of Faith”

By Jim Walsh

The word, “Faith” in the New Testament is from the Greek word “*pistis*.” In Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words, we read: *“Primarily, firm persuasion, a conviction based upon hearing, is used in the N.T. always of faith in God or Christ, or things spiritual.”* Thus, when we read Romans 10:17— *“So then, faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”*—the inspired writer is giving us both the definition from God's standpoint, and the definition of the word itself.

The Hebrew writer likewise includes the idea: *“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”* (Hebrews 11:1, NKJB) A persuasion, conviction is seen by the word “*evidence*.” That evidence, as we note in Romans 10:17, is provided by God. God desires that we have faith, so He includes the evidence to produce faith in His word. Thus faith, when it is produced, is not “wishful thinking,” nor is it “believing in things without evidence” as some want to define it. Faith is a conviction, a firm persuasion that is based upon evidence, which leads one to a conclusion.

To believe (Greek *pisteuo*) is what one does who is convinced of the evidence that God provides. One is a “believer,” when they act upon that evidence. So, when Jesus says, *“He who believes and is baptized will be*

saved....” in Mark 16:16, He is saying that those who accept the evidence that God has provided— that Jesus is the Christ and the only begotten Son of God (see Matthew 16:18)— and then act upon that evidence in accordance to God’s word (obeying the gospel), are then those who are saved. Therefore, one cannot be considered a “believer” without first having obeyed God’s word, and having therefore acted “*by faith.*” (see Hebrews 11)

News and Notes: Sick and recovering: Tim Harris Sr, Tim Harris Jr, Chad Harris, Betty Hurst, Steve Switcher, Gail Armstrong, Nicky Curtis, Janis Johnson, Elmo Wilson, Martha Norvell (in Corinth Rehab), Charlene Newborn, Delain & Robbie Doles, Penny Carmichael, Greg Fields, June Lawson (Lisa Busby’s Mom), Mike LaRue, and Eric Potts., Clois Wright, Debbie Keplinger, Kimberly McCullough, and Robert Adams, Megan Roach, and Velma Tucker.

Those Who Serve:

Sunday Morning 9:00 A.M. Service:

Opening Prayer: Adam Harris
Preaching: Brian Meade
Sermon: “*What It Means to be a Spiritual Person*”

Auditorium Bible Class: 9:35am

Sunday Morning 10:30 A.M. Service: Fred Johnson
The Book of Luke (Mike Willis)
Page 89, Question #13

Sunday Morning 10:30 A.M. Service:

Announcements: Fred Johnson
Opening Prayer & Scripture Reading: Russell Briggs
Romans 8:5-6
Song Leader: Paul Busby
Lord’s Table: Paul Busby
Assisting: Lee Busby & Adam Harris
Preaching: Brian Meade
Sermon: “*Carnal And Spiritual Churches*”
Closing Prayer: Tim Harris Sr.

Wednesday Evening: 7:00 P.M.

May 23rd:

Auditorium Bible Class: Paul Johnson
1 & 2 Samuel (Mike Willis)
Page 65, Question #10
Invitation: Brian Meade
Song Leader: Russell Briggs
Closing Prayer: Nathan Meade