

The Bulletin

Meeks Street Church of Christ

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“What Can Wash Away My Sins?” #2

By Brian Meade

God, in His infinite mercy and love wants us to be free from our sins—but it is up to man to respond according to His design and way of salvation. The basic problem man has in coming to God is simply listening to God’s directions without addition, subtraction, or substitution. Men often want something different than the plain and simple gospel way of salvation taught in Scripture.

We continue our theme from last week...



IV. Will The Old Covenant Give Us Forgiveness?

There are many today who expect to have forgiveness in keeping the Law of Moses given at Mt. Sinai. The Jews who are still practicing the Law under the Old Covenant are not moving on to the Christ and the New Testament way of salvation (John 5:40).

This is especially sad, because there is no forgiveness in keeping the Mosaic system, which always pointed to the coming Christ (Romans 10:4; Galatians 3:24; Hebrews. 9:11). The Law was fulfilled by Jesus at the cross of Calvary in His offering His own body as the final sacrifice to forgive sin (Hebrews 7:27; 9:12). And the worst part is that some try to look for redemption and salvation in a covenant that was fulfilled (Matthew 5:17; Colossians 2:14), and in that attempt, they miss out on the very grace they are hoping to have.

Notice Paul’s words to the Galatians, who were going backward to the Old Law by circumcision, *“Indeed I, Paul, say to you that if you become circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing.”* (Galatians 5:2). And two verses later he says, *“You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.”* (5:4). We cannot go back to the Law!

V. Does Just Reforming Our Lives Really Fix Our Sins?

There are those who look at the awfulness of their sins, and really want to do something about them. They know they have gone down the way of a sinner in doing some very terrible acts of immorality. The shame and pain of living with the remorse and guilt of such deeds can be overwhelming.

But instead of going to the proper means of forgiveness, they choose to just reform their lives in some form of repentance from past deeds. The logic to this approach is simple to them: “I’ll live differently from my past, and hope to lose these feelings of guilt because I no longer do those things.” It is a reformation of their life that they are trying to substitute for forgiveness for sins.

But will that be the right answer to our sin problem? It might make people feel some better about their lives to make these changes, but it does NOTHING to change their standing before God. We cannot think that as long as my good deeds outweighs my bad deeds, that I am alright with God. God does not grade our lives “on the curve.” His standard of righteousness goes beyond our standard of what is acceptable (Romans 3:23; 6:23). Otherwise, if reformation or repentance alone could save us, then why did Jesus go to the cross?

The Bible teaches us that working our own way to heaven will not work. *“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.”* (Ephesians 2:8-9). Many take this passage out of context to teach grace and faith alone salvation, but they miss the whole point Paul makes

in saying that our salvation is based upon our coming to the grace of God for forgiveness. That even after we do what God wants us to do (Acts 2:40-41; Acts 22:16), we still cannot boast of working our way to forgiveness—it is still God’s grace in following His way, NOT our own!

Some people only delude themselves into thinking they can “pull themselves up by their own bootstraps.” We cannot think that we can solve our sin problem on our own, without God’s help. We need help that only God can provide.

VI. Will Following The Creeds And Traditions Of Men Save Us?

The Religious world around is very good at establishing its own brand of creeds and traditions based on what men think service to God ought to be. It is a system based on the premise of following the Bible, plus a church rule book.

If you look at the dictionary definition of a creeds, it will say something to this effect: “Creeds are statements of basic beliefs about God. The term comes from the Latin credo, meaning I believe.”

That basically is telling you and I the opinions and dogmas of what people believe the Bible to be teaching. The basis of creeds are subjective in nature and vary from different church to church.

But the real question we are asking is: Do creeds and church traditions have any power to save us from our sins? If we believe in holding to all the traditions and creeds of a denominational church, will that help us overcome Satan’s power in our lives? (1 John 5:19). To answer this question is to look at how God looks at devising our own creeds in service to Him. And it even involves seriously looking at why men make creeds and traditions peculiar to themselves.

First, let’s look at the WHY of creeds and traditions. If you look and study every creed book written by men (and I several in my office that I collected over the years), you will find one very common theme to all of them—they teach the doctrine it takes to be in a specific denomination. The Baptist Manual written by Hiscox, makes one a Baptist. The Catechism is the creed book for the Catholic Church and makes one a Catholic follower. The 39 Articles of Faith makes one an Anglican follower. And following the Book of Mormon makes one of the Mormon faith.... etc. Having said that, creeds cause division (1 Corinthians 10-13) by their very existence, and fight against Jesus’ prayer for us to all “be one” (John 17:20-21).

Another major problem with creeds is that they add to, take away, and substitute many teachings of Christ to something different. Thus, they contradict plain Bible teaching. They add sprinkling for baptism, salvation by faith alone, offices and roles in the organization of the church that do NOT appear in the Bible at all (youth minister, minister of music, Pope, Cardinal, moderator, & circuit overseer...).

It is the attitude that we need more than what God has already given in the Scriptures to fill in the gaps, so to speak. But God has already spoken! (1 Peter 4:11; Jude 3). We already have “*All things that pertain to life and godliness.*” (2 Peter 1:3). The Bible is our complete guide in all things spiritual (2 Timothy 3:16-17), so much so, that creeds are completely unneeded and unnecessary!

Jesus’ attitude toward them ought to be warning enough to stay away from any and all extra-Biblical creeds and traditions of men. Jesus told the Jews of His day, “*Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying: ‘These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’*” (Matthew 15:7-9).

The words of Jesus are enough to answer the question, “Will following the creeds and traditions of men save us?” Jesus would say No to that!

VII. Can Water Alone Save Us?

Many look at water as a cleansing agent in getting rid of dirt. We use water and soap in the washing of dishes, the washing of clothes, the washing of our vehicles, and especially when we bathe.... Water is connected to our being clean, so much so, that one may get the mistaken concept that water alone can even wash us from our sins.

It may have been the reason why Naaman thought that the river of Jordan would not be as good as the rivers of Damascus, “*Are not the Abanah and the Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them and be clean?*” So he turned and went away in a rage.” (2 Kings 5:12). He is saying, if it’s water that can save me from leprosy, why not the best waters in Damascus? But that is not the point, it was following God’s directions that was all important to his cleansing from his disease.

The church of Christ has been falsely accused on many occasions of “believing in water salvation” by teaching that baptism is necessary for the remissions of sins. Even though the Bible clearly teaches one must be baptized to be in Christ (Acts 2:37-38; Acts 22:16; Galatians 3:27; 1 Peter 3:21). Many still miss the point like Naaman did, they don’t realize that it’s not the water that saves us from our sins, but the obedience (Romans 6:17-18).

News and Notes: Sick and recovering: Tim Harris Sr, Tim Harris Jr, Chad Harris, Daniel Holloway, Debbie Keplinger, Sam Johnson, J F Dancer, Robbie, Sheila, and Sherry Doles, Sandi Poole, Nathan Cox, Sandra Oliver, Aaron Posey (Phil Campbell), Wade Butler, Wesley Trimble, Danny Cottrell, Jerry Trimble, and Jon Smith.

Jimmy And Marsha Briggs are recovering from Covid.

Those Who Serve:

Sunday Morning 9:00 A.M. Service:

Opening Prayer: Blake Briggs
Preaching: Brian Meade
Sermon #1: *“What Love Will And Will Not Do Pt. 1”*

Auditorium Bible Class: 9:35am:

Workbook: Jerry Kennemur
Author: Philippians
Starting Page & Question: Paul R. Blake
Page #15, Question #1

Sunday Morning 10:30 A.M. Service:

Announcements: Fred Johnson
Opening Prayer & Scripture Reading: Paul Johnson
Scripture Reading: *1 Corinthians 13:4-8*
Song Leader: Lee Busby
Lord’s Supper: Danny Sheffield
Assisting: — —
Preaching: Brian Meade
Sermon #2: *“What Love Will And Will Not Do Pt. 2”*
Closing Prayer: Paul Busby

Wednesday Evening: 7:00 P.M.

November 9th:

Auditorium Bible Class: Paul Johnson
Workbook: The Miracles Of Jesus
Author: Mike Willis
Starting Page & Question: *Page #29, Question #1*
Invitation: Brian Meade
Song Leader: Russell Briggs
Closing Prayer: Tim Harris Sr.

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Meeks Street Church of Christ https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCgiXJxZC1oraOugO9qlfBtw?view_as=subscriber

And Our Facebook Page.

For sermon videos, articles, and announcements.

“What Love Will And Will Not Do” Part 1

Lesson Text: **Romans 13:8-10.**

I. Love Will:

- Seek The Goodwill Of Men— “agape.”
“to have a preference for, wish well to, regard the welfare of.” (Thayer, J. H. 1889).
- Be Given To All. **Luke 6:32-36; John 3:16.**
- Sacrifices For The Good Of Others. **1 Corinthians 13:3; Philippians 3:7-8.**
- Be Strict And Strong— “Tough love.” **Mark 10:21.**
- Discipline Those Who Need Correction. **1 Cor. 5:4-5; Rev. 3:19.**
- Serve Others Joyfully. **Galatians 5:6; 5:13; 3 John 5-6; 1 Thessalonians 1:3.**
- Seek To Convert The Lost To Jesus. **Acts 26:28-29.**
- Speak Truth To Those Who Need It. **Ephesians 4:15; Acts 24:24-25.**
- Keep Us Faithful. **2 Corinthians 5:14; John 21:15-17.**

II. Love Will Not:

- Seek To Harm Anyone. **Romans 13:10;**
- Show Partiality. **James 2:1-4; Galatians 6:15.**
- Show Disregard And Apathy For Others In Need. **1 John 3:17; Luke 16:20-21.**
- Enable Someone To Hurt Themselves. **Mark 10:22; Proverbs 9:8.**
- Ignore, Tolerate, Uphold, Or Approve Sin. **1 Corinthians 5:1-2; vs. 6.**
- Withhold Truth To Those Who Need It. **Ezekiel 3:18; Acts 20:26-27; 2 Kings 7:8-9.**
- Neglect To Serve Others. **Matthew 25:41-46.**
- Leave The Gospel Out Of Our Conversations. **Acts 17:16-19; Jeremiah 20:9.**
- Teach False Doctrine Or Deceive Others. **Ephesians 4:14.**
- Walk Away From God. **Hebrews 6:4-6; Luke 22:4-6.**

“What Love Will And Will Not Do” Part 2

Lesson Text: **1 Corinthians 13:4-13**. The Positives And Negatives Of Love.

III. Love Will Not:

- Envious Of Others. **Proverbs 14:30; 1 Kings 21:1-4; 1 Corinthians 3:3.**
- Boast Itself. **Proverbs 27:2; 1 Corinthians 1:31; 1 Corinthians 12:20-25.**
- Be Arrogant. **1 Corinthians 4:18-19; 1 Corinthians 8:1; 1 Corinthians 4:6.**
- Be Rude. **2 Samuel 10:1-5.**
“is not uncourteous, or inattentive to civility and propriety.”
(Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible (Vol. 2, p. 288).
- Seek Our Own Interest. **Philippians 2:3-5; 2:19-21.**
- Be Provoked. Not Like- **Hebrews 10:24**. But Like- **Galatians 5:26**.
- Keeping An Account Of Evil. **Proverbs 17:9; 1 Peter 4:8.**
- Not Rejoicing At Wrong Doing. **Romans 1:24-32; Proverbs 2:14-15.**
- Fail/End (NKJB/ESV). As opposed to things that will end- **1 Corinthians 13:8-12.**

IV. Love Will:

- Show Patience with All People. **2 Timothy 2:24-25.**
 - What Tests Our Patience Dealing With Others? **1 Thess. 5:14; Jude 16-19.**
- Be Kind To Everyone.
 - to provide something beneficial for someone as an act of kindness— ‘to act kindly, to be kind, kindness. (Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. , Vol. 1, p. 749).
 - **Acts 28:2 and 7; Ephesians 4:32.**
- Rejoice With The Truth. **Psalms 119:162; Luke 10:20.**
- Bear All things. The idea of supporting what is placed upon a thing is prominent in **1 Thess. 3:1, 5** (“forbear”), and **1 Cor. 13:7**. (Vines)
- Believe all things. Not gullible, But Optimistically believes the best in others.
- Hope all things. Expecting the best result and outcome in any endeavor.
- Endure all things. **2 Timothy 2:10; 2 Corinthians 11:24-28.**

Conclusion: **1 Corinthians 13:13— 12:30-31; Matthew 22:35-40.**