



November 2023

Editor, Keith Sharp

Designer, William Stewart



- unless otherwise noted, answers to questions by Keith Sharp -

In This Issue...

- **A Very Pleasant Conversation** | *Keith Sharp*
- **How Important Is Your Bible To You?** | *Jefferson David Tant*
- **Are We Taking John The Baptist's Side Or Herodias' Side In Their Dispute On Divorce?** | *Patrick Donahue*
- **The Worshiper or the One Whom We Worship** | *Jim Mickells*
- **The God Who Sees & Provides** | *William Stewart*
- **The Bond Of Peace** | *Keith Sharp*

Finally, brethren
WHATEVER THINGS are true
 are noble
 are just
 are pure
 are lovely
 are of good report
 IF THERE IS ANY VIRTURE AND IF THERE IS ANYTHING PRAISEWORTHY –
meditate on these things.

PHILIPPIANS 4:8

You can download this month's Meditate On These Things as a PDF file by clicking [here](#). Also, an archive of past MOTT issues is available at christistheway.com.

A Very Pleasant Conversation

Keith Sharp | Mountain Home, Arkansas, USA

Randy Cavender called me recently to wish me a happy birthday (78). He was actually a day late, but after all he's had on his mind, that is completely unimportant.

Randy calls me regularly from his pickup (hands-free) when he's delivering industrial parts to businesses in the Fort Smith area. He's like a son to me, and he considers me to be his dad. Randy is an elder in the Park Hill Church of Christ in Fort Smith.

His calls used to be jovial, laced with innocent humor. Sometimes a gotcha. Since July they're far more serious but still pleasant.

In July his son Sean was killed instantly by a driver who ran a red light doing 14 mph above the speed limit. Sean was an outstanding young preacher (36), who had a devoted wife and two beautiful little sons. He was leaving a church building in Athens, Alabama where he had spoken in a lectureship. When Randy called to tell me, I cried and prayed with him. Randy and Brenda have held up as well as any I have ever seen. They have a deep, abiding faith (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

Randy told me about a conversation with a mutual hero of ours, Lowell Blasingame. Apparently, Lowell said something about health problems, and Randy responded, "It beats the alternative." Lowell put an arm around him, and said, "Son, that's what we preach for." As Paul put it:

"For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean

fruit from my labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell. For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. Nonetheless to remain in the flesh is more needful for you.” (Philippians 1:21-24).

Father, when I'm no longer useful, please take me home.

He then told me about a sermon Gary Kerr preached entitled, "Do You Want to Live to Be a Hundred?" He reminded the audience that probably means losing your spouse, most of your children, maybe even some grandchildren, and your old friends. What I have seen of the troubles of advanced old age - aches, pains, immobility, incontinence, dementia, difficulty in hearing and seeing, trouble to your loved ones (Read Ecclesiastes 12:1-7) - makes me say a hearty amen to Paul and Gary.

Randy's calls have always been pleasant, and I treasure his friendship. Now his calls are sobering and enlightening. Keep on calling Randy. I love you and Brenda.

How Important Is Your Bible To You?

Jefferson David Tant | Hendersonville, Tennessee, USA

Recently I read an article in the "Barnabas Aid Magazine," an organization that aids believers in Christ in some Muslim and other nations where believers are often put to death. The article was, "Helping Suffering Believers to Grow in their Faith." That article contained the picture of an elderly man with his eyes blacked out to disguise his identity. With a big smile on his face, he is holding a copy of the Bible. Well, you might think that's nothing unusual. But note the first paragraph in the article: "After 68 years of praying, God has answered my prayers today. I received a free Bible. This is the happiest and most joyous day in my life," said 83-year-old Myanmar Christian "Meng," who walked 97 miles to receive a Bible funded by Barnabas Aid."

Did you catch that? At age 83, he walked 97 miles to get a Bible! And this was in a Muslim nation where believers in Christ are often persecuted and sometimes put to death. Would you walk, or even drive, that far in peace to get a Bible if you didn't have one? I'm afraid I don't know too many people who would go to that effort. Maybe drive, but certainly not walk!

So, what is your Bible to you? Is it something that sits on a shelf or the coffee table until it's time to pick it up, blow the dust off, and take it to church with you? Is it like your daily newspaper that you scan through, read a bit, and then put it down? Is it like your High School World History textbook stuffed away in a closet somewhere? Is your Bible just a place to write your family genealogy on the pages provided for that between the Old and New Testaments?

If you found a book that gave instructions about finding a hidden treasure of \$1,000,000, what would you do with it? Granted, the book may be lengthy and detailed, but it's quite obvious that you would spend all the time necessary to find the information and clues that would lead you to this treasure. Would you just rely on what someone told you about finding the treasure, or would you want to do the research for yourself? I think I know the answer.

Is there any treasure greater than eternal life in heaven? Note Paul's words to young Timothy: "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth." (2 Timothy 2:5) Timothy was blessed to have a godly mother and grandmother who taught God's Word to him in his young years. And Timothy needed to be diligent in accurately handling the word of truth.

"For I am mindful of the sincere faith within you, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am sure that it is in you as well" (2 Timothy 1:5). And just how did Timothy acquire this faith?

"You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known

the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:14-16).

Dear readers, eternity in heaven or hell depends on following God's instructions. There is nothing greater in this world than following God's instructions and then teaching them to your children, if you have them. And that takes time and effort. There is no shortcut. It's not enough, as a young woman said, "I don't need to read my Bible. My priest tells me what it says." What if her priest is mistaken? We need the spirit of the Bereans who searched the Scriptures daily to check out Paul's teaching to be sure his teaching was true (Acts 17:11) We must diligently search for ourselves!

Are We Taking John The Baptist's Side Or Herodias' Side In Their Dispute On Divorce?

Patrick Donahue | Harvest, Alabama, USA

Mark 6:17-28 reads:

“For Herod himself had sent forth and laid hold upon John, and bound him in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife: for he had married her. For John had said unto Herod, It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife. Therefore Herodias had a quarrel against him, and would have killed him; but she could not: For Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and an holy, and observed him; and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly. And when a convenient day was come, that Herod on his birthday made a supper to his lords, high captains, and chief estates of Galilee; And when the daughter of the said Herodias came in, and danced, and pleased Herod and them that sat with him, the king said unto the damsel, Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt, and I will give it thee. And he sware unto her, Whatsoever thou shalt ask of me, I will give it thee, unto the half of my kingdom. And she went forth, and said unto her mother, What shall I ask? And she said, The head of John the Baptist. And she came in straightway with haste unto the king, and asked, saying, I will that thou give me by and by in a charger the head of John the Baptist. And the king was exceedingly sorry; yet for his oath's sake, and for their sakes which sat with him, he would not reject her. And immediately the king sent an executioner, and commanded his head to be brought: and he went and beheaded him in the prison, And brought his head in a charger, and gave it to the damsel: and the damsel gave it to her mother.”

The story is this: Herod and Herodias are in an unscriptural marriage based upon Old Testament law. John the Baptist tells them their marriage is unlawful in God's sight. Herodias gets so mad that she orders John's head cut off. John is not just saying it was wrong for Herod to marry Herodias; he is also saying it is not lawful for Herod to have her. Meaning God (thru John) is demanding that the marriage be terminated.

Now let's think about New Testament unscriptural marriages ...

Matthew 19:9 reads “ ... whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.” If we are not requiring such adulterous marriages (as described by Matthew 19:9) to be terminated today, aren't we taking Herodias' side in her dispute with John?”

Now contrast that with a quote from Anthony Dunnavant in the Orange County (California) Register –

“Some conservative groups believe that divorced people who marry another spouse are living in sin. However, the number of divorces in the United States has led most denominations away from that teaching.” – Mr. Dunnivant, though probably a flaming liberal, is right. Churches have compromised on this issue not because a restudy of the Bible led them to change. They have compromised because the divorce rate has increased, and they are afraid of small membership numbers if they stand where Jesus stood. We see this precise compromise of Matthew 19:9 from the 1984 Methodist Creed Book – “Where marriage partners, even after thoughtful consideration and counsel, are estranged beyond reconciliation, we recognize divorce as regrettable but recognize the right of divorced persons to remarry.”

What about the congregation where you worship? Statistics say that in the great majority of congregations across America, 20-25% of the adult members are couples in second or third marriages that violate Matthew 19:9. Next notice Romans 7:2-3:

“For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.”

Now if we are not requiring such adulterous marriages (as described by Romans 7:2-3) to be terminated, aren't we taking Herodias' side in that dispute?

The Old Testament law read in Ezra 10:10-11:

“And Ezra the priest stood up, and said unto them, Ye have transgressed, and have taken strange wives, to increase the trespass of Israel. Now therefore make confession unto the Lord God of your fathers, and do his pleasure: and separate yourselves from the people of the land, and from the strange wives.”

These marriages were unscriptural for a different reason, but how many modern day preachers are willing to tell men in unscriptural marriages today (per Matthew 19:9) they need to separate from their wives like John the Baptist and Ezra did?

What comes next? ...

Compromise on adulterous marriage leads to compromise on gay marriage. Preacher Ken Wilson writes – “I have proposed a path for these pastors that allows them to embrace people who are gay, lesbian, and transgender and to accept them fully — welcome and wanted — into the company of Jesus. I wrote A Letter To My Congregation when I realized my views had changed and I needed to communicate the intense theological, biblical, pastoral, and spiritual process that I had been through to get to this new place. It began with a burr beneath the saddle of my conscience: why was I willing to let so many divorced and remarried couples know that they are welcome and wanted while refusing that same welcome to gay and lesbian couples? How could I say to the remarried couples, whose second marriage was clearly condemned by the plain meaning of scripture, ‘You are welcome and wanted,’ while saying to the two (lesbian) mothers raising their adopted child together, ‘I love you, but I hate your sin?’”

The following 2015 quote further exemplifies this ungodly philosophy – “United Methodist Church ... leadership voted to submit ... a ... legislative proposal ... that removes "prohibitive" language from **The United Methodist Book of Discipline** concerning homosexuality. ... the proposal would allow United Methodist pastors to perform same-sex marriages in United Methodist churches. ... this proposal does not consider homosexuality incompatible with Christian teachings even though Methodists have historically recognized the practice ... as sinful.”

So if we are taking Herodias' side in her dispute with John on unscriptural marriage, whose side are we going to take in the gay marriage debate?

The Worshiper or the One Whom We Worship?

Jim Mickells | Lewisburg, Tennessee, USA

More and more the leaders of various religious organizations are attempting to please the worshiper instead of pleasing the God they claim to worship. In the religious section of the paper, one can read of various things offered by churches today which they hope will appeal to the readers in an effort to get them to attend. Some of the things which I have seen over the years are: (1) Casual dress – come as you are (2) Free coffee and donuts; one man told me feed them (physical food) and they will come (3) Contemporary worship (4) twenty-first-century music (5) Relevant messages to modern day problems (6) Positive preaching which encourages (7) Will not call on you at home (8) For those who have little time for God, etc.

All of this reminds me of the words of the apostle Paul:

“As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed. For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ. But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ” (Galatians 1:9-12).

The question they must answer by appealing to those things mentioned above is, “Am I seeking to please man or God?” Obviously, they are looking to please the people instead of the Lord.

Jesus tells us the kind of worship which is acceptable to God.

“But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth” (John 4:23-24).

It takes the right object – **God**; the right attitude – **in spirit**; and must be offered in the right way – **in truth**. Remember, He is speaking about the true worshiper, the one who worships acceptably in the eyes of our Heavenly Father.

When people gather for worship, they need to understand their purpose for being there, to serve God. We should be in awe of our Father, wanting to please Him, doing everything as He instructs and doing it decently and in order (1 Corinthians 14:40). It should never be a matter of what pleases us, rather we should always be seeking to please our God.

Worship services to some have been reduced to nothing more than a social gathering. They come to feed their bodies instead of their souls. The same was true during the days of our Lord. Notice, “Jesus answered them and said, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled’” (John 6:26). In one publication, they showed one of their worship services. In the picture were men and women sitting at desks, their Bibles opened, cups of coffee, and eating while the preacher was teaching from the podium. Their emphasis was on a relaxed atmosphere, one where you can enjoy food and drink while all the time studying your Bible. Paul told those in Corinth they had houses to eat and drink in (1 Corinthians 11:22,34).

Even many of our brethren have been caught up in this movement. They have shifted the work of the church from spiritual to social. Why are they building gyms, fellowship halls, family life centers, etc.? Is it for the purpose of edification or entertainment? Oh yes, I know their contention, “We just use this as a means to get them here, and once they are here, we will teach them the truth.” Or “We are losing our young people, and we are simply providing these things, so they have a place to go and things to do to keep them from going to the wrong places and doing the wrong things.” Some say, “We are ministering to the whole man.” All this may sound good, and it may be very appealing to the masses, but where does one find Bible authority for such? Remember the words of John:

“Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes

to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds" (2 John 9-11).

Our efforts should always be to please God and not ourselves. The religious people of this nation at one time appealed to the Scriptures for all they believed and practiced, but such is not the case anymore. Yet if we are to please Jehovah, we must follow the instructions given by Peter, "if anyone speaks let him speak as the oracles of God" (1 Peter 4:11). Worship must be offered to the Father as He instructs and not to appease some man!

The God Who Sees & Provides

CHRIST IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

William Stewart | Kingston, Ontario, Canada

"...THE LORD APPEARED TO ABRAM..."

At the beginning of Genesis 12, God called Abram to depart from his father's house and to go to a land which God would show to him. In verse 1, it simply says, "...the LORD had said..." However, when we get to verse 7, it is no longer just a matter of hearing a voice from heaven, but "...the LORD appeared to Abram..."

Since "...no one has seen God (the Father) at any time..." (John 1:18; 6:46; 1 John 4:12), we must conclude that this was not the Father who spoke with and appeared to Abram, but someone else. This is not merely an angel appearing to the Patriarch, for the text identifies the one who appears as the LORD (Jehovah). Who can be called Jehovah, aside from the Father? Jesus is identified as God throughout the New Testament (John 1:1; 5:30; 20:20; Colossians 1:15; Hebrews 1:13; etc.). He is Jehovah God.

This was the first of several appearances to Abraham in the Scriptures.

"...MELCHIZEDEK, KING OF SALEM..."

The identity of Melchizedek, a priest and king before God, is an intriguing consideration. He appeared in Genesis 14:18, and just as quickly as he appeared, he was gone. Then, with the exception of a single mention in the Psalms, he is not mentioned again in Scripture until the book of Hebrews.

In the absence of an absolute statement, it would be unwise to be dogmatic about his identity, but the description of Melchizedek in Hebrews 7 certainly presents an interesting possibility. It may be, as some have assumed, that the writer is saying his genealogy is of no consequence. Or, is it possible that the writer is inferring much more. Consider:

"...this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all, first being translated 'king of righteousness,' and then also king of Salem, meaning 'king of peace,' without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually. (Hebrews 7:1-3)

"...THE ANGEL OF THE LORD..."

When Sarai dealt harshly with Hagar, she ran away into the wilderness. Moses tells us that "...the angel of the LORD found her..." and spoke with her (Genesis 16:7-10). If we are not careful, we will miss exactly Who this is that found and spoke with her. This is not an angel such as Gabriel or Michael, come as a messenger of God. This is the Angel of the LORD!

Hagar perceived Who this was, and Moses confirmed it for us in the Genesis account. Notice:

Then she called the name of the LORD who spoke to her, You-Are-the-God-Who-Sees; for she said, 'Have I also seen Him who sees me?' (Genesis 16:13)

You-Are-the-God-Who-Sees! Hagar was seen by and had seen God! But, not the Father, for no one has seen the Father. She was the pre-incarnate Christ. She did not see an angel, for the text refers to the One whom she saw as the LORD (ie. Jehovah). One of the ways the Christ appeared to people throughout the Old Testament was as the Angel of the LORD.

Years later, after Isaac was born, Hagar and Ishmael were sent away by Abraham. Their water supply used up, and unsure what to do, Hagar gave up. At this point, it was "the Angel of God" who assured her that all would be fine with her son (Genesis 21:16-20). This was likely the same God-Who-Sees that comforted her the last time she had departed Abraham's house.

"...I AM ALMIGHTY GOD..."

In Genesis 17, "...the LORD appeared to Abram..." again. He immediately identifies Himself as "Almighty God" (17:1). Abraham conversed with God throughout the chapter: the Lord reaffirmed His promise to Abram, establishing the covenant of circumcision, and foretold Isaac's birth. Having "*finished talking with him, God went up from Abraham*" (17:22). God appeared to and spoke with the patriarch in person, but it was not the Father (John 1:18; 1 John 4:12); it was the pre-incarnate Christ.

In the next chapter, again "the LORD appeared to him by the terebinth trees" (Genesis 18:1). Abraham saw three men on this occasion - two of them were angels who went down to Sodom to warn Lot and his family. The third person whom he saw was the LORD (see 18:13-14). The LORD (the Christ) would continue to talk with Abraham and reveal to him the judgment against Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 18:17ff). Once more, when the LORD was done speaking with Abraham, he went His way (18:33).

"...THE-LORD-WILL-PROVIDE..."

Abraham was commanded by God to take Isaac, the son of promise, and to offer him as a burnt offering. With no argument, Abraham left the next morning to do as God said. As he took the knife to slay Isaac, the Angel of the LORD called to him, saying,

Do not lay your hand on the lad, nor do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me. (Genesis 22:12)

A ram was caught in the thickets nearby. Abraham offered it as a sacrifice instead of Isaac and called the place "The-LORD-Will-Provide" (Genesis 22:14).

TAKE AWAY POINTS

- If we read that God "appeared" to someone, we must conclude it was not the Father, as no man has seen the Father, it is the Christ.
- "The Angel of the LORD" is not simply "an angel." This is a description of the pre-incarnate Christ as God's messenger throughout the Old Testament.
- The Old Testament establishes that Jesus is indeed Almighty God.
- Melchizedek is a foreshadow of Christ, but might he also have been the Christ?

The Bond of Peace

Keith Sharp | Mountain Home, Arkansas, USA

"I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:1-3)

The story is told that in a small, rural, Midwestern congregation years ago the little white, frame building was heated with coal, which was piled in the basement. There was a falling out in the congregation, so one faction sat on one side and one on the other. Eventually the two factions decided they couldn't worship

together, but, since neither was willing to give up the building, they decided to meet at different times. Later one faction concluded it was wrong for the two groups to use the same coal, so they divided the coal into two piles to be paid for separately. One frosty morning a prankster sneaked into the building and wrote on the chalk board, "One Lord, One Faith, two coal piles."

Peace is "tranquility," "concord" (Mounce. 1133). It is the absence of turmoil.

"Angry words! O Let them never
From the tongue unbridled slip;
may the heart's best impulse ever
Check them ere they soil the lip" ("Love One Another").

"It is honorable for a man to stop striving, Since any fool can start a quarrel" (Proverbs 20:3).

It is possible to have peace without unity. I live in peace with all my neighbors, but we are not spiritually one. We are not united. But it is not possible to have unity devoid of peace.

Paul besought the Ephesians "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:1-3). Peace is the bond, "that which binds together..., a band of union" (Mounce. 1282). The Roman magistrates were attended by "lictors," guards, each carrying a "fasces," a bundle of rods tied together with a leather thong, having a projecting axe blade, to illustrate the power of unity. That thong that bound them together is like peace among brethren.

What attitudes can we manifest that will help achieve peace?

To have peace we must "walk worthy of the calling with which you were called" (Ephesians 4:1). Our calling is to be Christians (Acts 11:25-26), i.e., "followers of Christ" (Thayer. 672). Our walk, the way we live, should reflect worthily of that claim.

Years ago, my brother's twin, older daughters, were getting ready to go off to college. My parents had us all to their house in Little Rock for a farewell meal. Dad asked me to lead the prayer, and I prayed that, as our children grew up and went out on their own, they would so live as to reflect honor rather than dishonor on the names of their parents and grandparents. We should so live as to reflect honor on the honorable name we wear, "Christian."

Paul demonstrated the attitude that leads to peace in the introduction to this exhortation. "I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you..." He did not assert the apostolic authority he possessed but implored (**NASB**) them as "the prisoner of the Lord." He was literally a prisoner in Rome (Ephesians 3:1; 4:1; 6:20), but he was there because of his service to Christ (Philippians 1:13). He made a humble plea rather than issuing an apostolic command.

What are the characteristics of that worthy walk? "with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love" (Ephesians 4:2).

Lowliness

"Lowliness" is translated "humility" in both the **NASB** and the **ESV**. It is not a feeling of inferiority but a voluntary lowering of oneself to serve rather than to be served. Jesus is the perfect example. He was Lord in heaven, existing in the very form of God, yet did not cling to this but "emptied" Himself (Philippians 2:5-8, **NASB, ESV**) to become a man, a servant, and yet further "He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross" (Philippians 2:8), the most shameful death of all (Galatians 3:13). He lowered Himself to serve rather than to be served (John 13:1-17).

Even so we should lower ourselves to seek what others want rather than what we desire, to help others rather than to seek help, to be concerned about the feelings and wishes of others rather than our own.

Because Christ so lowered himself to serve,

“Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2:9-11).

If we so humble ourselves in obedience and selfless service, God will glorify us with Him (Romans 8:16-17).

Longsuffering

This word means exactly what it sounds like. It is a combination word: “(makros, long, thumos, “temper”) (Thayer. 387). A man with a “short fuse” is quick tempered, quick to become angry. Conversely, one who is longsuffering is slow to anger. Mounce defines it as “patient enduring of evil” (1204). “Evil” here would include slights, insults, and aggravations.

“For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: ‘Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth’; who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously” (1 Peter 2:21-23).

Many years ago I knew a middle aged Christian in Selma, Alabama, who taught an adult class in the local congregation. A family in the congregation didn’t like him. Their teenage son followed the man out of the building hurling insults at him. He ignored the wayward youth and just walked to his car. Such an attitude, acting as Christ did, is a big help in keeping peace.

Bearing with One Another

The NASB translates this, “showing tolerance for one another.” Mounce renders it “to endure patiently” (473). Again, the perfect example, as in all aspects of our lives, is Christ Jesus (1 Peter 2:21-23). As He was dying for the sins of his tormentors who were vilely taunting and ridiculing Him, He uttered no threats, but prayed, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do” (Luke 23:43).

In 1972 Johnny Seaton, who was a contractor and a deacon in the Downtown Church of Christ in Rogers, Arkansas, oversaw the construction of the beautiful new building for that congregation. An older man in the church sharply criticized everything about the building. Johnny ignored the criticisms and went about the work. Over fifty years later the congregation still meets in that beautiful building, though they are now outgrowing it.

In Love

Of course, love is the greatest quality of our character as Christians (1 Corinthians 13:13), the trait by which we come closest to reflecting the moral nature of our heavenly Father (Matthew 5:43-48), and the crowning point of becoming partakers of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:2-7). It is not an emotion but simply seeking what is best for others (Romans 13:10). The Father in heaven is the ultimate example (John 3:16). Whatever we say or do that impacts our brethren, we must ultimately seek their salvation.

“By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth” (1 John 3:16-18).

Conclusion

Peace among brethren is a wonderful thing.

“How sweet, how heav’nly, is the sight,

When those that love the Lord

In one another’s peace delight,

And so fulfill the word" ("How Sweet, How Heavenly," Joseph Swain).

Is each of us doing his part to maintain peace among the brethren?

"I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:1-3)

Works Cited

Bible

English Standard Version.

New American Standard Bible.

Mounce, William D., **Mounce's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words.**

Thayer, Joseph H., **A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament.**



If you no longer wish to receive these emails, please reply to this message with "Unsubscribe" in the subject line or simply click on the following link: [Unsubscribe](#)

[Click here](#) to forward this email to a friend

Meditate On These Things (MOTT)
2950 Hwy 5 S
Mountain Home, Arkansas 72653
US

[Read](#) the VerticalResponse marketing policy.

Vertical DELIVERED BY
response
Try It Free Today!