

Anchor Of The Soul
P.O. Box 401
Spruce Pine, NC 28777

Anchor Of The Soul

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“Dying to Self”

Author Unknown

When you are forgotten, or neglected, and you don't sting and hurt with the insult or the oversight, but your heart is happy, being counted worthy to suffer for Christ, that is dying to self.

When your good is evil spoken of, when your wishes are crossed, your advice disregarded, your opinions ridiculed, and you refuse to let anger rise in your heart, or even defend yourself, but take in all in patient, loving silence, that is dying to self.

When you lovingly and patiently bear any disorder, any irregularity, any impunctuality, or any annoyance; when you stand face-to-face with waste, folly, extravagance, spiritual insensibility -- and endure it as Jesus endured, that is dying to self.

When you are content with any food, any offering, any climate, any society, any raiment, any interruption by the will of God, that is dying to self.

When you never care to refer to yourself in conversation, or to record your own good works, or itch after commendations, when you can truly love to be unknown, that is dying to self.

When you can see your brother prosper and have his needs met and can honestly rejoice with him in spirit and feel no envy, nor question God, while your own needs are far greater and in desperate circumstances, that is dying to self.

When you can receive correction and reproof from one of less stature than yourself and can humbly submit inwardly as well as outwardly, finding no rebellion or resentment rising up within your heart, that is dying to self.

"Then Jesus said to His disciples, 'If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.'" (Matthew 16:24-25)

The Cry of Blind Bartimaeus

By Casey Head

In Mark 10:46-52, we find that “blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the highway side begging” when Jesus passed by, encompassed about by hoards of Jews. When Bartimaeus heard that Jesus was nearby, he cried out, “Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me.” Some of the Jews present told him to be quiet, but he cried out yet again, “Thou son of David, have mercy on me.” Jesus stopped and had the blind beggar brought to him. Jesus asked him in verse 51, “What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?” and the blind man replied, “Lord, that I might receive my sight.”

How did Bartimaeus respond when Jesus healed him? The parallel account, Luke 18:43, says, “And immediately he received his sight, and followed Him, and glorified God: and all the people, when they saw it, gave praise unto God.” In other words, Bartimaeus was so thankful that he praised God and followed Jesus.

But why was the blind man so thankful? Why did he glorify God? Why did he choose to follow Jesus? After all, Jesus had healed many other people prior to this occasion that did NOT react this way. There were even some that almost seemed ungrateful! So what was it about Bartimaeus that set him apart from the rest?

Might I suggest that the answer lies in the initial cry of Bartimaeus, “Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me.” You see, this blind beggar recognized that Jesus Christ was the only one capable of healing his blindness, and furthermore, he realized that Jesus was not obligated to him in any way, shape or form! That is why he was so thankful when Jesus healed him. That is why he praised God and followed Jesus now that his sight was restored.

Spiritually speaking, we must be like blind Bartimaeus! We must recognize that we are sinners (Rom. 3:23) in desperate need of the mercy of God (Titus 3:5). God is not obligated to save us even if we consider ourselves to be “good people.” He doesn’t owe us anything! When we have this humble attitude, then we will be truly thankful when we receive the free gift of salvation, and we will praise God and devote our lives to Him.

But if we do not have the attitude of Bartimaeus -- if we do not see our need for God’s mercy and we believe that God owes us eternal life -- then we will not appreciate the Lord, and we will most certainly be an apathetic Christian...if we are even a Christian at all. The humble cry of Bartimaeus should teach us all a lesson.

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The Righteousness of the Pharisees

By Bryan Matthew Dockens

For all their notoriety, it will surprise many to learn that Christ regarded the Pharisees as righteous. "For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:20).

Though the Pharisees, as a group, are correctly known to be among the most ignoble in scripture, the reason they are so lowly esteemed today varies considerably from the reason Jesus criticized them. Many perpetuate the notion that the Pharisees' problem was their strict adherence to the law, suggesting the worst thing any Christian could do would be to become a stickler for the rules. Yet this simply is not so. The Lord implied that the Pharisees were righteous, teaching that all who follow must exceed the Pharisees in righteousness in order to be saved. Righteousness, by the way, is simply "the character or quality of being right or just." Although He often rebuked them, Jesus acknowledged that, in some sense, the Pharisees were right!

"Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples, saying: 'The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do. For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers'" (Matthew 23:1-4). In unmistakably plain language, Jesus instructed His disciples to obey the Pharisees, but modern religious types openly defy this concept.

The major fault of Pharisaism was not, as so many presume, legalism; it was hypocrisy. Neither Christ nor His apostles ever suggested the Pharisees stood to be blamed for their strict adherence to the law of God. The constant criticism against them was their "Do-as-I-say; Not-as-I-do" mentality. In a single discourse, Jesus, no less than seven times, proclaimed: "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!" (Matthew 23:13, 14, 15, 23, 25, 27 29). The word "hypocrite" is derived from the Greek for "actor". The Pharisees were not sincere in their detailed devotion. They were just actors playing a role, posers, impostors. Among the woes Jesus pronounced against the hypocritical Pharisees was that they "outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness" (Matthew 23:28).

The Lord requires His disciples to be strict like the Pharisees, but unlike that ancient sect, He expects Christians to be sincere about it (Philippians 1:9-10; 1st Timothy 1:5).

"Anchor Of The Soul" is distributed monthly by the **Spruce Pine church of Christ**. We are a non-denominational church whose only goal is to follow the New Testament pattern.

Meeting Times

Sunday

Bible Class.....10:00 AM

Morning Worship.....11:00 AM

Evening Worship.....6:30 PM

Wednesday

Bible Class.....7:00 PM

Directions

Our building is located at 36 McHone Rd just behind the Mitchell Veterinary Clinic in Spruce Pine. Call (828)467-1463 if you need a ride to services or have any questions about the church.

Ten Reasons to Assemble With Us...

1. Our sermons are completely Bible based.
2. Our classes are informative and uplifting.
3. We have Bible classes for all ages.
4. Our worship is in spirit and in truth (Jn. 4:24).
5. Our worship is meant to glorify God, not man.
6. We make all of our visitors feel welcome.
7. We are truly a spiritual "family."
8. We will do everything we can to help you grow closer to God (as we do the same for one another).
9. There are people of all age-groups, including many young families with children. You won't feel out of place.
10. We are not "just another denominational church." We have many things to offer that no church in the immediate area is currently offering.

Bible Trivia

How Old Were They?:

1. How long did Adam live?
2. Who was the oldest man in the Bible? How old was he?
3. How old was Abraham when he died?
4. Joseph lived in Egypt when he died. How old was he?
5. How long did Moses live?

Finish This Verse in Psalm 23:

6. "He maketh me to lie down in _____."
7. "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the _____ for ever."

Challenge Question:

8. Was Peter the first Pope? Prove your position from scripture.

Evidence of Intelligent Design:

In Ezekiel 26:12, the prophet said that the stones, timber and soil of the city of Tyre would be cast into the sea. In 333-332 B.C., Alexander the Great used the debris of the fallen city of Tyre to build a land bridge from the mainland to the island of Tyre. This prophecy was fulfilled exactly!

Answers:

1. 930 years (Gen. 5:5); 2. Methuselah lived 969 years (Gen. 5:27); 3. 175 years (Gen. 25:7); 4. 110 years (Gen. 50:26); 5. 120 (Deut. 34:7); 6. Green pastures (Ps. 23:2); 7. House of the Lord (Ps. 23:6)

Challenge Question ANSWER From July 2008:

Can the earth be destroyed by man? According to the Bible, God, not man, will destroy the earth (2 Pet. 3:9-13). "But wait," someone might object. "What about manmade global warming?" Well, God says in Genesis 8:22, "While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease." The temperature may fluctuate, but man cannot destroy this planet! Another question: must we protect the environment? Certainly, we ought to be good stewards of what God has given us, but at the same time, God has given mankind dominion over all the earth (Gen. 1:26-28). We should care about the environment but we should not be so concerned that we never tap into the resources that God has given us.

Are You Hearing for the Wrong Reason?

By Byron Smith

Jesus often had a large audience listening as He taught. However, the motive of some, in listening to Jesus, was not so noble. Some would listen to Jesus with malicious intent. On one occasion, the enemies of Jesus asked Him a question regarding divorce for the purpose of "testing Him" (Mt. 19:3). On another occasion, Jesus was asked about paying taxes to Caesar, not with sincere interest in the right answer but to "entangle Him in His talk" (Mt. 22:15; Mk. 12:13).

On the other hand, others demonstrated an eagerness to hear God's message with intent to benefit from what was spoken. Cornelius is an example of such noble reception. He said to the apostle Peter, "we are all present before God, **to hear** all the things commanded you by God" (Ac. 10:33). The context then shows his positive response to that message. Consider a second example. As Paul and Barnabas traveled to the island of Cyprus to preach the gospel, they encountered a man by the name of Sergius Paulus, of whom it is said; he "**sought to hear the word of God**" (Ac. 13:7). This man possessed a commendable attitude that is worthy of imitation.

What about today? Similar attitudes and approaches to God's word can still be observed. Yes, some hear for the right reason, but many are "hearing" God's word, whether by listening to others preach or by personal Bible study, for wrong reasons. Many study the Bible merely as an academic study. They view the Bible solely as ancient literature possessing little intrinsic truth. Others study the Bible with the single motive of disproving its validity. They are identified as skeptics, atheists, agnostics, etc. Still others, alleged believers, study the Bible simply to "prove" their theories, preconceived ideas, and man-made doctrines. Of course, these are all wrong reasons for studying the Bible. We must not go to the Bible merely to defend what we already believe, but rather we should go to the Bible to determine what we should believe. Such an approach to Bible study will be productive in determining truth and eliminating error.

Hearing God's word is tremendously important. Jesus said, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear" (Mt. 13:9). Yet, he would also warn, "Take heed what you hear" (Mk. 4:24). James wrote, "let every man be swift to hear..." (Jas. 2:19), but then he would write, "But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves" (Jas. 2:22). Certainly, anyone who wishes to please God needs to hear with the **proper motive** (cf. Ac. 17:11) and the **proper response** (cf. Mt. 7:26).

The Spruce Pine church of Christ
Invites you to join us as we study...

"The Suffering of Christ"



August 24, 2008 @ 11:00 AM

Byron Smith will make the following points...

- It was God's plan that Jesus would suffer
- God was in control of what happened
- The physical aspect of Jesus' suffering
- The spiritual aspect of Jesus' suffering

To get to our building, take 226 South to McHone Road (located between the Mitchell Veterinary Clinic and the Spruce Pine United Methodist Church). Turn right into the second driveway on the right. You will see our sign at the top of the hill.

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Why Attend Church?

By Andy Mitchell

A Churchgoer wrote a letter to the editor of the newspaper and complained that it made no sense to go to church every Sunday. "I've gone for 30 years now," he wrote, "and in that time I have heard something like 3,000 sermons. But for the life of me I can't remember a single one of them. So I think I'm wasting my time and the preachers are wasting theirs by giving sermons at all."

This started a real controversy in the Letters to the Editor column, much to the delight of the editor. It went on for weeks until someone wrote this clincher: "I've been married for 30 years now. In that time my wife has cooked some 32,000 meals. But for the life of me, I cannot recall what the menu was for a single one of those meals. But I do know this: they all nourished me and gave me the strength I needed to do my work. If my wife had not given me those meals, I would be dead today."

No comments were made on the sermon contents anymore. (Story taken from "Bible Insight", Volume 4, Number 27, July 8, 2001)

Reasons for attending the right church:

1. It Is Considerate of Others. "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another; and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." (Heb. 10:24-25)

2. It Provokes Others to Love and Good Works. "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another; and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." (Heb. 10:24-25)

3. God Commands It! "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another; and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." (Heb. 10:24-25)

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Do you have any questions about any of the following Bible subjects? Circle any that may apply...

The plan of salvation

Are babies born in sin?

The free-will of man

Miracles

Moral issues (drinking, adultery, etc.)

The deity of Christ/Godhead

The book of Revelation

Jesus' final return

The New Testament church

Other:

If you would like to receive free material on any of these subjects, then cut out this coupon and mail it to P.O. Box 401, Spruce Pine, NC 28777. Or call us at (828)467-1463.

Words About the "Word"

In a recent issue of the *Bible Society Record*, the following quotations from prominent and well-known Americans appear concerning "God's Word."

George Washington: It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible.

Abraham Lincoln: I am profitably engaged in reading the Bible. Take all of this Book upon reason that you can, and the balance by faith, and you will live and die a better man.

Woodrow Wilson: I have a very simple thing to ask of you. I ask every man and woman in this audience that from this day on they will realize that part of the destiny of America lies in their daily perusal of this great Book.

Dr. Helen Keller: Unless we form the habit of going to the Bible in bright moments as well as in trouble, we cannot fully respond to its consolations, because we lack equilibrium between light and darkness.

Douglas MacArthur: Believe me, sir, never a night goes by, be I ever so tired, but I read the Word of God before I go to bed.

Herbert Hoover: The whole of the inspirations of our civilization springs from the teachings of Christ and the lessons of the prophets. To read the Bible for these fundamentals is a necessity of American life.

-*Gospel Herald*

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Lightning Lesson

Almost everyone knows the story of Jonah. He was a Jewish prophet who was sent to prophesy unto Nineveh, the capital of the wicked Assyrian empire. Of course, we know that Jonah didn't want to go and was consequently swallowed by a "great fish" (Jon. 1:17) but I want to focus primarily on the preaching of Jonah and the response of the Ninevites. In Jonah 1:2, the prophet was told, "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me." In Jonah 3:4, he prophesied unto the people, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown." So, because of their wickedness, God was going to destroy the city of Nineveh. That was His plan! But is that what happened? No! In Jonah 3:5, we see that the people "believed God" and they changed their ways, and in verse 10 it says, "And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that He had said that He would do unto them; and He did it not." In other words, because of the Assyrian's positive reaction, God *changed His mind*. This passage flat-out denies Calvinism. In the story of Jonah, God's plan changed because of man's choice. It is the same today. Sinners will unquestionably face the wrath of God in judgment...unless, like the Assyrians, they choose to obey God.