

News & Notes

Sunday, May 30, 2010

Remember in Prayer: Tommy Alberson; Mary Baily; Jeff Hopkins; Martha Lou Jones; David Judge; Shirley Judge; Dot Ketchum; Chad King; John and Deliah Mann; Rhonda Nance; Shane Nance, Wade Nance; Joe Phillips; Joyce Phillips; Lowell Poff; Ann Ray; Curtis Ray; Edna Ray; Edsell and Martha Williford;

Sympathy is extended to the family of Martha Jordan.

Pantry item for the month of May is dish soap.

The new edition of **House to House/Heart to Heart** is in the foyer.

Ashland Events: Today: Fellowship meal after morning service and a service at 1:30PM; June 26: Vacation Bible School;

Area Events: Ending today: Homecoming at the Terry Street congregation; Beginning today: Gospel meeting at the New Albany congregation; July 18-21: Vacation Bible School at the Chapman congregation;

Sermon in Preview:

AM: Things Man Can Do which God Cannot Do

PM: Service will be led by the young men of the congregation

For the Record (May 23, 2010):

Attendance: 76 Contribution: \$1220.00 Budget: \$1388.00

The Ashland Church of Christ

P. O. Box 25
Ashland, MS 38603-0025

www.ashlandcoc.org

acoc@ashlandcoc.org

Sunday:

Bible Study 9:30 AM

Worship 10:30 AM

Worship 5:00 PM

Wednesday:

Bible Study 6:30 PM

Shepherds:

Barney King
Jeff Roberson
Carrol Street

ASHLAND ANNOUNCER

A YEAR OF REMEMBRANCE

"Remind them of these things..." (2Timothy 2:14)

How Does the Bible Authorize?

Jeremy Northrop

There is a large amount of debate today in religious circles regarding authority. There are some who would say the Bible is a little less than a guide for holy living. Others would oppose such a philosophy saying the Bible is an absolute standard of right and wrong. A great many people would classify themselves somewhere in between these two interpretive approaches. Paul commanded, "And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him" (Colossians 3:17). Certainly, the topic of biblical authority is a vital one and not every approach to it can be correct. Many might ask members of the church of Christ questions like, "Why do you participate in the Lord's Supper every Sunday?," "Why do you have a baptistery?," or "Why don't you speak in tongues today?" All of these questions are properly answered when the answer to one paramount question is biblically given. These questions and many others come down to one question — How does the Bible authorize? How does the child of God properly follow Colossians 3:17? After all, the church advocates adherence to a restoration principle in that members want to "Speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent." Yet, there are some terms and items found being used by church members today which are not found in the Bible. Terms like missionary, gospel preacher, gospel meeting, and baptistery are never found in the Bible. Why do members of the church use them? The answer lies in how the Bible authorizes.

One way the Bible authorizes is through direct command. In Matthew 28:18-20, Jesus gave a command that His disciples teach the world the gospel. Paul, through inspiration, commanded giving to be done each first day of the week (1Corinthians 16:2). Paul

commanded Christians be a people of prayer and constantly engaged in prayer (1Thessalonians 5:17). These examples of direct commands in the Bible are commands which must be followed. If the child of God is not going to follow these commands, then sin is being committed. There can be no tolerance in not keeping these commands. They must be obeyed as specifically as they were given. For example, Jesus commanded His disciples to “go into all the world.” The medium which is used to accomplish the command of “go” would be open to freedom. One can walk, run, ride a horse, drive a car, or fly in an airplane. As long as “going” is being accomplished, then the command is being followed. If Jesus had said, “Walk into all the world...,” then anything but walking would not be acceptable. The keeping of the command must be as specific as the command itself. Christians are commanded to give but the amount of the gift is not determined in the New Testament. Christians are commanded to pray, but the place is not commanded. As long as the commands are being obeyed to the degree they are given, then God will be glorified.

Sadly, there are some who advocate a “command only” doctrine or teaching. These would advocate that anything which is not a command in the Bible does not need to be heeded. In truth, the Bible authorizes in other ways as well. The “command only” doctrine has done nothing but harm the church and promote the devil.

The events surrounding Peter cutting off the ear of Malcus are found in four passages in the New Testament (Matthew 26:47-56; Mark 14: 43-50; Luke 22:47-53; John 18:1-11). Until the Bible student reads all four accounts, a proper understanding of all the events cannot be ascertained. This illustrates the importance of complete biblical inspiration as dictated in 2Timothy 3:16-17. The entire Bible needs to be considered if the child of God is going to live a holy life. The Bible gives examples of things the first-century Christians practiced which are not commanded. Among them would be the laying on of hands to appoint individuals to specific roles of service (Acts 13:3; 1Timothy 4:14), fasting (Matthew 6:16; Acts 13:3), and congregations of the Lord’s people meeting in the houses of members (Romans 16:5; 1Corinthians 16:19). These are examples of things which the church today has the authority to practice based on example.

Often times, when discussing biblical examples, a very important question arises — when is an example binding on

Christians today. The answer has several components to it. The example is binding when it pertains to all Christians everywhere. Building an ark would not be binding even though there is an example of it in the Bible. The example is binding when there is a command surrounding it. We have a command to take the Lord’s Supper in 1Corinthians 11:26 and an example of the first-century church doing it on the first day of the week in Acts 20:6-7. An example is binding when the example is revealed to have direct application to Christians today. In John 13:15, Jesus revealed His life as an example for Christians to follow. In 1Corinthians 10:6, Paul reveals some negative examples of God’s people in the Old Testament. The practices of the Old Testament would not be binding but the poor obedience would serve as mistakes from which Christians can learn.

The Bible also authorizes though necessary inference sometimes called forced conclusions. Examples of these inferences are things such as elders are to be men because they are to be “the husband of one wife...” (1Timothy 3:2), fasting is acceptable (and possibly even required) because Jesus said, “When you fast...” (Matthew 6:16), and drinking apparatuses are necessary to take the fruit of the vine as commanded in 1Corinthians 11:25. All of these things teach the Bible student to accept what the Bible implies. There are certain conclusions which have to be drawn. The Bible student does not want to go too far in their reasoning. Many infer there were three wise men at the birth of Christ because there were three gifts. The Bible does not imply or merit such a conclusion. An implication of the Bible is such that the Bible student is left with no other conclusion. In Romans 2:21-23, Paul implied the Jews were wrong because they condemned the Gentiles for the very same things in which they were involved. The Bible authorizes through necessary inference.

Colossians 3:17 is a powerful passage commanding the child of God to find biblical authority for all practices: “And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.” The Bible gives all things the child of God needs in order to live and live holy (2Peter 1:3). If there is no command, example, or inference for an action or practice, then it is not authorized and therefore is sin. May Christians indeed, “Speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent.”