

THE BELLEVILLE MESSENGER

March 1

2009

"PLEASING GOD AT HOME"

The first and foremost concern of every Christian should be the conducting of his life so as to be pleasing to God. This must be done, not just one day a week, but every day of our lives. However, some try to justify their failure to assemble regularly with the saints with the declaration, "I can please God just as well in my home as I can at the church building." The implication of this statement is that there is nothing we need to do to please God that we cannot do outside the assembly and that the assembling of saints together is of little value or importance.

Why do people make the above statement? What are they doing "at home" while the saints are assembled to worship God? Are they home reading and studying the Bible? Do they get their family together for a time of prayer and family worship? I am convinced that the answer to each of these questions is "NO." Why do I reach such a conclusion? Because those who spend time reading and studying the Bible in their homes and those who get their families together in the home to pray and worship are the ones who are faithful in assembling with other saints to worship God. Those who fail to assemble with the saints to worship God do not engage in such in the home either. Yes, we need to please God in the home, but this does not negate the importance of our assembling together.

Luke tells us that the saints in Troas *"gathered together to break bread"* upon the first day of the week (Acts 20:7). Paul indicates that the Lord's Supper was to be observed when *"ye assemble yourselves together"* (1 Corinthians 11:20). He says it was not possible for the Corinthian brethren to eat the Lord's Supper when they assembled

together because of the way they were conducting themselves and he then informs them as to how they should partake of the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:23-29). The person who fails to assemble with the saints when he could be present is failing to observe this memorial.

Also, the Bible teaches that in assembling together we are able to exhort one another and provoke one another unto love and good works (Hebrews 10:24,25). A failure to assemble with the saints deprives us of needed help and encouragement each of us needs.

Add to these truths the fact that God commands us to assemble ourselves together (Hebrews 10:25), we see how foolish it is for anyone to insist that he can forsake the assembling of himself with the saints and still be pleasing to God. Yes, we must please God "in our homes" but we can not do so when we fail to obey His will.

✍ James Hahn



"AUTHORITY, AUTHORITY!"

Several years ago I had a discussion with a brother about the church support of human institutions and organizations. He contended that there was nothing wrong with churches supporting human institutions such as colleges and orphan homes. When I asked him to give scriptural authority for such practices he replied, "Authority, Authority, that's all you people know to holler!" Rather than give Bible authority for his actions (which, of course, he could not) he found it much easier to ridicule the idea of demanding authority for all we do.

This man, I am sorry to say, is not alone in his thinking. The attitude of many is, "What's the big deal?" "So what if the Bible doesn't authorize the things we are doing. After all, what we are doing is a good work and we don't see anything wrong with it." Do these statements sound familiar? I am sure they do to any who have had discussions or studies with people about the matters mentioned above or any other religious practice which is not authorized in the word of God. Are these people correct in their thinking? Does it make any difference whether we have scriptural authority for what we do?

To answer this question we need to go to the proper source for our answer. We cannot rely upon our own feelings or emotions to guide

us (See Jeremiah 10:23; Acts 26:9). We must allow the word of God to guide us (Psalm 119:105).

In Matthew 7:21-23 we read of some who claimed to be acting in the name of Jesus but their actions were not accepted by the Lord. Jesus said that He never knew them and that they were "workers of iniquity." The word translated "iniquity" means "without law." Some translations read "lawlessness" in this passage. These people, though religious and active, were acting without law or without authority for their actions. The same is true of many in the religious world today. They are zealous and active, but they can find no authority in the word of God for the things they teach and practice.

The apostle Paul declares that the inspired scriptures will furnish the man of God *"completely unto every good work"* (2 Timothy 3:16,17). If a work is not authorized by the scriptures we have no right to contend that it is a "good work." Let us not be guilty of exalting our thoughts above God's thoughts.

John tells us how serious this matter really is. Men say that it really doesn't make any difference but John says, *"Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God"* (2 John 9). Men say we can go beyond the teaching of Christ and still be accepted of God. John, guided by the Holy Spirit, says that this person does not have God. Whom will you believe?

Not only is it important for us to abide in the teaching of Christ, but we must not be guilty of supporting those who fail to abide in His teaching. John goes on to say, *"If any one cometh unto you, and bringeth not this teaching, receive him not into your house, and give him no greeting: for he that giveth him greeting partaketh in his evil works"* (2 John 10,11).

Yes, we cry "authority, authority" and we will continue to do so if we would please God. Don't you want to please Him? If so, then make sure you have His authority for all you teach and practice.

When I stand before my Lord in judgment I want to hear Him say, *"Well done, good and faithful servant"* (Matthew 25:21). The only way I can be assured of hearing such is to be a "good and faithful servant in this life. This will be accomplished by respecting His authority in all things and faithfully following His will.

✍ James Hahn

DOING THE WILL OF THE FATHER

Jesus said, *"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven"* (Matthew 7:21). This statement is in direct contrast to the things we hear taught by many today. Some would tell us that just so long as one believes that Jesus is Lord then you have done all that is necessary to please the Lord; however, Jesus very plainly refutes this idea as we see from the passage quoted above. In fact, the idea that one must "DO" anything to be saved is scoffed at by many. You do not hear denominational preachers telling people what they must "do" to be saved, nor do you hear them telling men and women that they need to "obey the gospel." Why is this so? Why do so many men who claim to be preachers of the Word fail to tell people what that Word so plainly teaches? The answer is simple. What the Bible teaches and what is taught by denominational preachers are entirely different messages. You cannot follow the teaching of God's word and become a member of ANY denomination. Following the teaching of God's word can only make one a child of God and a member of the Lord's body or church (Acts 2:36-47; Ephesians 4:4-6; 1:22,23).

In reply to the question *"What shall we do?"*, Peter told the people to *"repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins"* (Acts 2:37,38). We need to be preaching the same message to lost men and women today. We must not think that we can change God's word and still please God. It simply cannot be done. Those who obeyed were added by the Lord to the church (Acts 2:47). This was the Lord's church; not some human denomination. Will you obey the Lord's teaching and become a member of His body? (JH)

Belleville church of Christ

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www.bellevillechurch.net

Schedule of Services

Sun. Bible Study. 9:30 a.m.
Sun. Morning Worship. . . . 10:30 a.m.
Sun. Evening Worship. . . . 5:00 p.m.
Wed. Bible Study. 7:00 p.m.

Evangelist

James Hahn. (317) 745-1507

Elders

Charles Carpenter. . . . (317) 839-3873
James Hahn. (317) 745-1507

Deacons

Leon Nevins. (317) 272-2966
Don Perry. (765) 676-5825
Alvin Stanley. (317) 831-3514