

THE BELLEVILLE MESSENGER

March 15

2009

"MAKING EXCUSES"

In Luke 14 Jesus tells of a man making a great supper and inviting many to come. The Bible says "they all with one consent began to make excuse" (v. 18). No one likes to admit that he makes excuses, however if each of us would be honest we would all have to plead guilty to making excuses.

Why do people make excuses? Some, when making excuses, say they are "not making excuses" but just giving "reasons" for their failure. They fail to realize that their "reason" for failure is in reality an excuse. Excuses are not made to "explain the facts." They are made to conceal the facts from others and in all probability, ourselves as well. Men do not make excuses for doing right. It is when we fail to do what we know we should do that we make excuses.

Some have the idea that so long as we tell the truth we are not making excuses. The person who believes this is surely deceiving himself. In the parable noted above there is no indication that the people were lying about buying property, buying oxen or getting married. However, they used these things to conceal the real problem; they simply did not want to attend.

The same is true with many today. Some fail to assemble with the saints. When questioned about their failure to attend they reply, "We had company come in" or "We were out of town." Both statements may be true but they do not explain the problem. The real problem is lack of dedication and conviction. In the beginning when God asked Adam if he had "*eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat*" Adam replied, "*The woman whom*

thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat" (Gen. 3:11,12). What Adam said may have been true but it did not change the fact that he had eaten of the forbidden fruit. He was still responsible for his own actions.

Someone has said that when you don't want to do something one excuse is as good as another. I wonder how many of us have really listened to the excuses we sometimes offer for not doing the things we know we should be doing. It does not make us feel good to be forced to admit that the only reason we are not doing what we should be doing is that we simply do not have the will and determination to do it. Excuses may soothe our conscience but they will not make us acceptable in the sight of God.

Excuse making is a poor substitute for obedience. When we fail to obey the Lord we have no excuse. Each of us can obey the Lord if we want to. When a person determines that he is going to do the Lord's will there is nothing nor anyone that can prevent him from doing so. If you have never become a Christian you may make many excuses. You may try to blame your parents; you may point to "all those hypocrites" in the church or you may talk about all your personal problems and difficulties, however there is only one reason why you have not obeyed. As of this time you simply have been unwilling to make the commitment necessary to become a Christian.

Making excuses does not solve any problem. The people Jesus referred to in the parable still did not attend the supper. When you offer excuses for your failure to obey you still have not obeyed. This is why excuse making is so serious. It may give us a feeling of false security and, of even more importance, keep us from gaining heaven.

How do we overcome excuse making? Some do not want to quit for in so doing they will be seen as they really are. The only way to overcome excuse making is to start doing the things we have been making excuses for not doing. When we do this we will be pleasing to the Lord and there will be no need for excuses.

Are you a Christian? Are you faithfully serving the Lord? If not, what is your excuse? You may give one, but the truth is you can be a faithful servant of Christ if you want to. Why not lay aside all excuses and obey Him (Heb. 5:8,9).

✍ James Hahn

"HIGHEST DECISION-MAKING BODY"

In 1988 The General Council of the United Methodist Church convened in St. Louis, Missouri. Each day the local newspaper carried stories dealing with the actions of the conference. On May 3, 1988, the St. Louis Post-Dispatch carried a front page story under the headline, "Methodists Vote To Keep Stance On Homosexuality." Some of the religious leaders of the community expressed their delight with the decision of the conference to maintain the denomination's stand on homosexuality. They thought it was an encouraging sign that the assembly (by a vote of 676-293) approved a proposal to keep a ban on ordaining "self-avowed, practicing homosexuals" or appointing them to clerical posts.

What would the situation be if the vote had been reversed? I assume the Methodist Church would then ordain "self-avowed, practicing homosexuals" for the same article refers to the General Conference as "the highest decision-making body of the United Methodist Church." If this be true then those who are members of the United Methodist Church must either submit to the decisions of this conference or leave the church. However, such a decision would have no bearing whatsoever upon the truth, nor would it make homosexuality acceptable to God. Members of the United Methodist Church may be affected by such a decision but members of the body of Christ would not, for no conference or convention has any authority to make or change laws in the body of Christ. Jesus said, "All authority is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. 28:18). This leaves none for any pope, conference or convention.

The Psalmist of old declared, "For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven" (Psalms 119:89). Man may not like the word of God. He may even reject it. He may make decisions and adopt resolutions approving things condemned in God's word. However, there is one thing man cannot do. Man cannot change the word of God.

I predict that it will not be many more years until this same conference will approve the very practice they condemned in 1988. (Some religious groups have already done so.) But, when this is done the word of God will still identify homosexuality as "vile affections" and "against nature" and "that which is unseemly" (Romans 1:26,27).

It will also continue to read, "that they which commit such things are worthy of death" (Romans 1:32).

I appeal to all of you who may be members of the United Methodist Church, or any other denomination, to turn from the creeds and decisions of men and follow Christ. Why would anyone desire to be a member of a church that has an assembly of men as its "highest decision-making body"?

✍ James Hahn



NOT ME!

In the "Family Circus" comic strip there is a frequent story line that appears. The parents have observed something broken or that someone has done something they should not have done. They ask, "Who did this?" There is a little "ghost-like" character that all the children point to. His name ("Not Me") is printed on his body. This reminds me of so many today. It doesn't matter what they have done their first reply is, "Not me." One of the most prevalent problems in our society today is the failure of individuals to be willing to accept responsibility and accountability for their actions. Every problem is always the fault of someone else. We all need to learn that each one stands before God accountable for his or her actions. We can not escape accountability by saying, "Not Me." (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.

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

Evangelist

James Hahn... (317) 745-1507